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Editorial “Spirit of Hope”

IN HIS STATE OF THE NATION ADDRESS, President Thabo Mbeki alluded to the “Spirit of Hope” that prevails amongst the citizens of our country. This age of hope which South Africa has entered is supported by independent statistics (Markinor biannual government survey), which reflect that South Africa is ranked as one of the most optimistic nations in the world, 12 years after our first democratic elections. The President described this era of “Hope” as an opportunity to reflect on our achievements and to look towards the challenges of growth and delivery for all the people of South Africa.

To ensure that the disadvantage communities share in the unprecedented economic growth, we are urged to close the economic divide and improve delivery of basic services to the poor. Our role in Foreign Affairs is to continue reminding ourselves that our foreign policy implementation is integrally linked with reducing the economic divide, that what we seek for our people is what we seek for all citizens of the world, an equal peaceful and just world. It is in light of this role that this month’s edition of DFA Now looks at our peacekeeping initiatives on the continent.

Coming back home, we discuss the January Cabinet Lekgotla- which outlined new priorities for the coming financial year, with greater focus on the IRPS Cluster. Internally, we unpack the much-anticipated situation surrounding the Foreign Service Dispensation with focus on compensation for DFA officials abroad.

May we all be inspired by the President’s and the country’s optimistic outlook and may we all take the honour of representing our nation with pride.

Finally it is imperative to reiterate that according to Markinor’s biannual government performance barometer survey, eight out of ten South Africans believe that both the government and the President are on the right track. Thus as officials of the Foreign Affairs Department and as ambassadors of our country in our own respective roles, we represent a country that is united in its belief that South Africa is truly entering its “Era of Hope”. Ours is to tell this beautiful and inspiring story of hope to the best of our ability. ▀

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January 2006 Cabinet Lekgotla IRPS Perspective

FOR THE CO-ORDINATION of the implementation of the government's work programmes, the programmes have been arranged according to Clusters, which are allocated to co-ordinating Ministers. The Clusters are: The Economic Cluster – co-ordinated by the Ministers of Trade and Industry and Public Enterprises; the Social Cluster – co-ordinated by the Ministers of Health and Social Development; Justice, Crime Prevention and Security Cluster (JCPS) – co-ordinated by the Ministers of Safety and Security and Justice and Constitutional Development; Governance and Administration Cluster – co-ordinated by the Ministers of Public Service and Administration and Local and Provincial Government; as well as the International Relations Peace and Security (IRPS) – co-ordinated by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defence.

This year the Cabinet Lekgotla took place from 25 – 27 January 2006. All Clusters made presentations at the Lekgotla on their priority areas. The Economic Cluster focused on the concrete measures required for the realisation of the objectives of the Accelerated

The Cabinet Lekgotla takes place in January and July every year. The Makgotla provide an opportunity for the country's Executive to review the performance of the State, reflect on policy issues and also frame the government's programme of action for the years ahead. This Meeting draws together the President, the Deputy President, Cabinet Ministers, Deputy Ministers, and all National and Provincial D-G's, as well as Premiers.

Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (ASGISA). The JCPS Cluster discussed amongst others, the challenge of overcrowding in prisons, as well as the challenge of reducing the levels of crime by between 7% and 10%. The Social Cluster discussed the implications of the challenges outlined in the Micro-social report. Its other priority areas of focus was the Urban Renewal

Programmes (URP) and the Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Programme (ISRDP). The Governance and Administration Cluster remained seized with the issue of the Capacity and Organisation of the State, also within the context of implementing the ASGISA. Shortcomings in the municipalities as well as Project Consolidate as a response to such shortcomings was also discussed.



Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma bids farewell to South African members of the AU Peacekeeping Force stationed in the Ivory Coast.



Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma receives a warm welcome by the woman of South Darfur, Sudan.

The presentation of the IRPS Cluster focussed on the Progress Report on the implementation of its priorities for 2005/06 as well focus areas for 2006/07. The Cluster also presented strategy papers for policy discussion and direction namely: Strategy for the engagement of China; and Strengthening SA's engagement in Africa. The Cluster also provided the Lekgotla with an 'Assessment of outcomes of the WTO Hong Kong Ministerial Conference' which took place from 16 — 18 December 2005.

IRPS PROGRESS REPORT

The Progress Report reflected on the progress as well as challenges in the implementation of the Cluster priorities for 2005/06 and also gave an indication of issues that would be pursued in 2006/07. The work of the Cluster remains located around the themes of the Consolidation of the

African Agenda, South South Co-operation, Global Governance, and the Strengthening of Bilateral Relations.

CONSOLIDATION OF THE AFRICAN AGENDA

South Africa's Foreign Policy is centred on the Consolidation of the African Agenda. The work of the Cluster in Africa is anchored on:

- Strengthening multilateral institutions at a regional and continental level, as well as critically supporting the implementation of the programmes of these institutions
- Peace, security and stability, and post Conflict Reconstruction and development
- Strengthening of Bilateral Relations

On the multilateral front SA continued its contribution towards the strengthening of the African Union (AU) and its institutions as well as the South-

ern African Development Community (SADC). This involves contributing in the scale of assessment towards the AU funding. As host of the Pan African Parliament (PAP), SA provided support to the institution during its meetings. A final location for the location of the PAP in Gauteng is being sought. SA played a role in the merger of both the Court of Justice and the African Court on Human and People's Rights. Judge Benard Ngoepe has been appointed to the court for a two-year period. SA contributed to the restructuring process of the SADC. An official from the Department of Foreign Affairs was seconded to assist in the process.

The Cluster continues to support NEPAD. NEPAD's implementation has scored some successes, especially the launch of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). SA's self-assessment process has started. SA has participated in efforts aimed at the implementation of the following NEPAD priority sectors; ICT, health, tourism, science and technology. It is therefore imperative that the capacity of the African Union and SADC is strengthened in implementing the NEPAD priority sectors. The Specialised Technical Committees of the AU will play a major role in this regard. Their speedy establishment is very crucial.

SA chaired the Peace and Security Council of the AU during 2005. SA continues to be involved in the Sudanese peace process. This is in the form of capacity building for the Government of Southern Sudan as well as leading the Post Conflict Reconstruction Committee. Moreover President Mbeki continues mediation in the Cote d'Ivoire. Major successes in the bringing about lasting peace in the conflict areas have been scored such as the elections of a new government and President in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo's constitutional referendum and recently adopted resolution to hold both parliamentary and presidential elections in June 2006. SA also continues playing an active role in the Comoros.

In order to further enhance its work in the African continent, Cabinet took the decision that the country should be represented in every African country. This will also further Strengthen



Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Aziz Pahad with Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Arab and Africa Affairs, Mr Ahmad Azizi at a press briefing, Diplomatic Guesthouse, Tshwane.

Bilateral Relations with African countries. SA is currently represented in 37 African countries. During 2005 three more Missions were opened in Chad, Guinea and Congo (Brazzaville).

SOUTH SOUTH CO-OPERATION

As part of promoting the agenda of the South and addressing challenges facing the South engagement within amongst countries of the South is crucial. To this end, the key areas of focus in this area remains the follow up to the Asia-Africa Summit, engagement through the Non Aligned Movement (NAM), strengthening of the India, Brazil, and South Africa Dialogue Forum, as well as participation in the G77.

Preparations are underway for the NAM Summit, and the forthcoming IBSA Summit. South Africa as chair of the G77 presents an opportunity to advance the interests of developing countries in all international negotiations.

GLOBAL GOVERNANCE: POLITICS AND SECURITY

In the area of Global Governance, the issue of UN Reform, Weapons of Mass Destruction, the Middle East situation and the security situation in

Iraq will continue to capture the attention of South Africa and the rest of the international community. SA has been actively involved in the Reform of the United Nations and preparations for the UN Millennium Review Summit, which took place in September 2005 in New York. As part of the Africa Group, SA is guided by the Ezulwini consensus with regard to the UN Reform. South Africa will continue to contribute positively to ensuring the advancement of reforms in the UN efforts, including by participating in the "Leaders' Network", which is an initiative by the Prime Minister of Sweden to garner support and momentum for UN Reform.

The issue of Iran remains central in the deliberations of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Since March 2003, the IAEA Director-General, Dr Mohammed ElBaradei, has been reporting to the Board of Governors on issues related to the implementation of safeguards in the Islamic Republic of Iran. South Africa has consistently called on Iran to clarify all outstanding issues and questions raised by the IAEA in the various reports of the Director-General. South Africa be-

lieves in the speedy conclusion of the Iranian nuclear issue within the framework of the Agency. South Africa has consistently reiterated the basic and inalienable right of all Member States to develop atomic energy for peaceful purposes in conformity with Articles I and II of the NPT, and reiterated its deep concern over the slow pace of progress towards nuclear disarmament.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC

The main thrust of the Cluster's work in this area has been the G8 outcomes, the WTO Ministerial Conference as well as the trade negotiations being pursued with the different regional blocs. The current negotiations on Free Trade Agreements are between; SACU, China and India FTAs, SACU-US, SACU-MERCUSOR. SA also continues to be engaged in the implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) as well as the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD 14).

STRENGTHENING OF BILATERAL RELATIONS

The Cluster seeks to further Bilat-



President Thabo Mbeki with the Chinese Vice President Zeng Qinghong.

eral Relations with other parts of the world other than the African continent. Thus the Cluster has given the Gulf States especially the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) some serious attention for geopolitical and economic reasons. The liquidity of the Gulf provides investment opportunities for South Africa.

POLICY PAPERS DISCUSSED

South Africa's relationship with China has, since the adoption of the "One China Policy" in 1998, actively developed into a high-level engagement which is generally seen to be on a sound footing. The absence of a clear and coherent strategy for engaging China has been reflected in the uncoordinated engagements by various state government departments. The Towards China strategy seeks to ensure that SA has a co-ordinated strategy for engaging China in order to maximise on the relationship for the benefit of the country. The strategy looks at the pragmatic identification of clear goals and targets as well as pro-

grammes around implementation. The strategy also seeks to investigate the need to analyse and develop the construction of a long-term, stable relationship with China that is responsive to the changing international profile of China as well as beneficial to Africa and South Africa.

The African Agenda is the anchor of South Africa's foreign policy objectives on the Africa continent. SA's capacity and co-ordination in discharging its international mandate have become strikingly challenged when it comes to the African continent. Thus in order to further consolidate the country's advances in the continent, the Cluster explored ways of Strengthening SA's engagement in Africa.

WAY FORWARD

Flowing from the discussions, the Lekgotla gave the Cluster a mandate to initiate policy papers for discussion at the July 2006 Cabinet Lekgotla. The paper on China will continue to be a work in progress as per comments

made by the Lekgotla. Moreover a clear detailed Trade and Investment strategy to leverage the Gulf States in support of the Government's Economic Growth Strategy should be worked. Furthermore, the Cluster should also work out a document on South Africa's engagement with the Russian Federation. The Lekgotla noted a political change which is sweeping Southern America, characterised by a rise in left wing governments and mandated the Cluster to investigate implications of such a phenomenon.

As part of phase two of the paper on 'Strengthening SA's engagement in the Africa continent', the Cluster should submit a detailed assessment of each country in the continent in order to strategically inform South Africa's engagement. The Cluster should also investigate the role of the various financial institutions relevant to the African continent and submits proposals on how to facilitate the process of ensuring that the institutions act in the best interest of the continent. ▀

Recently, Africa's democratic leaders expressed their optimism about the progress and prospects on the continent. This is owed much to the peace that now prevails to the previously war torn countries and the elections being held for the first time in their history. The views of the African leaders emerged from *African Leaders State of Africa Report 2005*, released by former United States Ambassador to Tanzania Charles Stith.



President Thabo Mbeki with South African members of the AU Peacekeeping Force in North Darfur, Sudan.

SOUTH AFRICA, AS ONE OF THE ROLE PLAYERS on the continent should take credit for most of peace initiatives, mostly spearheaded among others, President Thabo Mbeki. With the country's involvement, one has seen continuing progression towards peaceful transition in power, which has resulted in a new generation of leadership.

One of such leaders is Burundi President Pierre Nkurunziza, who won the presidential elections in August 2005. Prior to this, Burundi had held its municipal, parliamentary and senatorial elections. South Africa had provided a neutral protection force in Burundi since 2001, ensuring the security

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of the returning exiled political leaders. The country was involved in intensive negotiations facilitated by former Deputy President, Jacob Zuma (who took over from Former President Mandela), in January 2003. The African Union deployed an African Mission (AMIB) to supervise the Cease-fire Agreements concluded between the Transitional Government of Burundi and the Armed Movements between 7 October and 2 December 2002. Currently South Africa is in the process of withdrawing the VIP protectors as the Burundians can now provide protection to their politi-

cal leaders. South Africa is presently listed as the tenth largest Troop Contributing Country (TCC) to the United Nations (UN), a remarkable achievement bearing in mind that the country has just joined the international community. Since 2001, South Africa has participated in the African Union (AU) and UN mandated or endorsed Peace Missions. Further than that South Africa has played a critical diplomatic initiatives, such as, an effort to avert war in Iraq and culming of the political stability in Zimbabwe.

South Africa's participation in peace

missions is guided by the Government's policy prescripts; the Foreign Policy and the White Paper on Peace Mission, which strives to bring peace and stability in Africa. Following the signing of the Lusaka Cease-fire Agreement in July 1999, and the key Peace Accords in South Africa, the DRC is on its way in the path towards achieving lasting peace. The South African Government, through the mediation of President Mbeki, has been closely involved in facilitating dialogue in order to find a lasting solution to the Congolese conflict. In December 2005, Congolese voted in huge numbers on their country's new draft constitution. Earlier this month, President of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Joseph Kabila, was nominated to stand for re-election by his People for Reconstruction and Democracy Party (PPRD) in Kinshasa. This culminated into the signing of the constitution, which sets stage for the June elections these steps certainly mark important milestones in the history of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Many African leaders have also been upbeat about Uganda's first Multi-party elections in 26 years.

Being a supporter of MONUC, South Africa has provided 1 390 personnel to its peacekeeping operations, accompanied by 15 staff officers and 3 military observers. In terms of electioneering, a technical agreement between South Africa's Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) and the DRC Independent Electoral Commission was signed to share technical expertise between the two countries. The South Africa team has been assisting the DRC with voter registration and education; recruitment and training of electoral staff; development of logistical and infra-structural capacity; development of information technology skills; conflict resolution; acquisition of equipment; and voting and results collection.

Sudan continues to be a challenge for the African Union. South Africa has contributed 322 troops and 60 civilian police in support of the African Mission in Sudan (AMIS). The Executive Council of the AU established a Ministerial Committee on

Post-conflict Reconstruction in Sudan and South Africa has since been chairing the Committee. In addition, South Africa through the University of South Africa is conducting capacity building amongst the Southern Sudan Leadership that will be responsible for governance in South Sudan.

The situation in Cote d'Ivoire remains a great concern to South Africa and the international community. Despite international pressure and the mediation efforts by the African Union, 2005 saw little progress in ending the crisis that has divided Cote d'Ivoire for more than three years, with rebels still in control of the north and the government holding the south. In November 2004, the AU appointed President Mbeki to mediate in Cote d'Ivoire after a flare-up of fighting. In 31 January 2005, President Mbeki broke the stalemate and convinced rebel ministers to return to the government of national reconciliation, culminating to the signing of the Pretoria Agreement on 6th April 2005. President Laurent Gbagbo and warring factions agreed to immediately end the hostilities, agreed to disarm, and also to allow the opposition leader Alassane Ouattara to participate in the presidential elections scheduled for October 2005. The rebel movement reached a new deal known as the Pretoria II Agreement, aimed at speeding up the disarmament process, setting up a timetable for the revision of several key

laws, including text on national identity.

On 14 October, the United Nations Security Council endorsed a decision by AU Peace and Security Council. The draft recommended that President Laurent Gbagbo should remain in office after his mandate expires on 30 October 2005 for not more than 12 months. A newly appointed Prime Minister, Charles Konan Banny, with full authority over his cabinet should steer the country towards the elections. In 29 December 2005, Prime Minister Banny presented his new cabinet, a 32 member unity government which brings together all the representatives of the ruling party, the rebels and the political opposition. Minister Dlamini Zuma recently, on behalf of President Mbeki, visited Cote d'Ivoire as part of the International Working Group mandated by the AU to mediate on the transition of the government to a civilian rule.

CONCLUSION

It is clear from the peace initiatives led by South Africa, that they have led to significant changes on the continent. However, South Africa's involvement alone is not enough, hence President Thabo Mbeki had been encouraging other African leaders to be more involved in peace initiatives. This is evident with the Chairmanship of the African Union, currently

chaired by Congo and Nigeria leading the Sudan peace talks in Abuja. ▶



In September 1995, the Minister of Public Service and Administration commissioned an investigation on the revision and implementation of measures to correct disparities prevalent in the former Foreign Service Dispensation (FSD). The FSD was to ensure that officials who perform foreign service abroad would maintain a standard of living corresponding to the image which the RSA Government wishes to project abroad taking into account the nature and level of duties and responsibilities assigned to the designated official.

A FIRST REPORT, WHICH PROVIDED a comprehensive and manageable description of the FSD, was finalised and submitted during June 1996. The second report, which contains the evaluation, analysis and recommendations on the Republic of South Africa FSD, based, inter alia, on an investigation on the dispensations which applied to designated officials by the United Nations and a selection of other countries, was completed on 20 May 1997 (Kluever Report). This culminated in Cabinet Memorandum No 13 of 1997 on recommendations and a final report, which was approved by Cabinet on 22 May 1997.

This process was followed by extensive negotiations between the State as employer and all trade unions represented in the Public Service Central Bargaining Council (PSCBC). The negotiations finally culminated in the signing of an agreement in the PSCBC, namely Resolution No 8 of 2003 on the new FSD.

The current FSD was implemented with effect from 1 December 2003 in terms of

Compensation for officials abroad



The South African Embassy in Windhoek, Namibia.

PSCBC Resolution 8 of 2003 to be applicable to all Government officials stationed at a South African mission abroad.

The purpose of the FSD is to enable a designated official who performs foreign service to maintain a standard of living corresponding to the image which the RSA government wishes to project abroad taking into account the nature and level of duties and responsibilities assigned to designated official.

In implementing Resolution of 2003 a "phased-in approach" was proposed so that those employees who received a negative adjustment in their allowances and benefits in the new FSD, would retain the allowances of the old FSD for the period they are attached to the particular mission.

The FSD is designed to achieve the following:

- reimburse an official for the cost of relocating his/her household
- provide official with dwelling and work facilities to operate effectively as a representative of the RSA abroad
- to compensate an official for higher cost of living abroad and additional costs incurred deriving from the need to generally operate at a particular level
- compensate an official for and provide relief from onerous conditions prevailing at the mission, and
- provide special measures or facilities to meet extra-ordinary needs, such as death or serious illness of an official or family member.

The dispensation introduced in December 2003 is underpinned by the following basic principles:

- adequacy in that the packages received by officials stationed abroad enable them to perform their representational and other functions with a view to ensure that the objectives of the representation system are achieved
- equitability in that the elements of the revised dispensation are structured to equalise the standard of living situation of officials holding positions at different missions and that such living conditions are not lower than that which

an official would have enjoyed in the RSA

- simplicity to ensure that it is easy to understand and the administration thereof is not complicated
- stability such that the effects of such factors as the exchange rate fluctuations and changes to the RSA dispensations on the FSD and affected officials are minimised
- maintainability such that it is easy to adjust the design of its elements as a result of changes to currency fluctuations, cost of living increases/decreases and improvement/deterioration of conditions at the location of the missions
- justifiability such that each element is easy justifiable in the context of the dispensation taking into account 'cost of living' (COL) factors, hardships etc.
- affordability such that the cost is kept within affordable limits that can be budgeted for along other government priorities, and
- interactivity such that any changes to the dispensation should take cognisance of the fact that the various elements of the FSD dispensation influence or could influence one another.

The FSD Determination, issued by the Minister of Public Service and Administration, provides for an annual revision of the allowances / elements. The revision will be considered by the said Minister based on Employment Conditions Abroad (ECA) information of the September survey of the previous year. The adjustment will only be effected with effect from 1 April 2006 if substantial changes take place.

The FSD allowances were adjusted with effect from 1 April 2005 based on the September 2004 ECA salary survey.

After the adjustment of the dispensation, the Department of Public Service & Administration (DPSA) and the Department of Foreign Affairs were presented with the following challenges:

- the effect of the fluctuation in the variables, such as the Budget Exchange Rate (BER) provided by National Treasury, and cost of

living indices provided by ECA, on the FSD allowance/elements

- the inconsistency in determination of Lower Quartile benchmark amounts on certain levels;
- instability of dispensation from year to year
- criteria for the categorisation of foreign service missions abroad in terms of determining the degree of hardship
- the calculation of the COLA is based on the RSA salary. When the RSA salary increases the COLA decreases
- two different systems are applicable, the old and the new FSD
- senior Managers in the missions got less compensation (COLA) than their immediate junior colleagues.

INTERVENTION BY TOP MANAGEMENT

The above mentioned challenges led to the Top Management approaching DPSA and Treasury for a solution to the problem posed by the new FSD. It was found out that a permanent solution was to come up with an alternative system. This would take longer than was expected and an interim measure was devised. The proposed interim measure was that the current benchmark level, which is determined at Lower Quartile, must be raised by 7.5% with effect from 1 April 2005.

On studying closer the formula that is used to calculate the COLA for Senior Managers in missions it was discovered that DPSA had used the whole package of their remuneration in RSA instead of 60%. This had to be rectified from 1 December 2003.

The back pay process of the 7.5% is being processed together with the correction of Senior Managers' COLA. By the end of February all the officials in missions would have received it.

AN ALTERNATIVE SYSTEM

DFA, DPSA and Treasury Top Management instructed that an alternative FSD system should be researched and the aim is to have it in place by April 2007. An appointment of a consultant to do research on this system is being finalised and it is hoped that this will be started early in March 2006. ▀

FRONT COVER PIC: President Thabo Mbeki and First Lady Zanele Mbeki (left) accompanied by The Speaker of Parliament, Baleka Mbete at the Opening of Parliament 2006.

BACK COVER PIC: Ministers Banquet 2005 Vergelegen, Somerset West. Minister Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma (centre) and Deputy Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Sue van der Merwe (left) and Aziz Pahad (right) on their way to the event.

