



February 2007

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Your voice to be heard



**President Thabo Mbeki and
Minister Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, at the
Foreign Affairs Heads of Mission Conference
held at Somerset West, Cape Town**

DEAR COLLEAGUES,

THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY was a very busy month. Of note was the President's State of the Nation Address on 9 February, which set the tone for Government's Programme of Action for the year 2007/08. Thereafter our Minister hosted the function for the Diplomatic Corps in Cape Town on Saturday 10 February. This event was followed by the 6th Heads of Mission Conference from 11 to 17 February where a lot of fruitful discussions on international relations and administration issues took place.

During the month the Department also finalised the budgets and it is hoped that all Branches will heed the call to finalise and submit their business plans timeously so that the funds could be released. Priorities for the country, especially in the field of international relations, have been outlined by the President in the State of the Nation Address and it is for all of us to roll-up our sleeves and get to work in forging new avenues and sustaining existing achievements in foreign relations.

During the past two months the following new Missions were opened: Bucharest (Romania), Sao Tome (Sao Tome & Principe), Port-of-Spain (Trinidad & Tobago), Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso), and Cotonou (Benin).

Remember that DFA Now needs and value your views, opinions and inputs. Please forward your letters and articles to the Editor before the deadline.

Happy reading!

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GEPF

MANUAL TAX DIRECTIVES

SINCE THE ELECTRONIC link of the Government Employees Pension Fund (GEPF) with the South African Revenue Services (SARS), tax directive requests from the GEPF to SARS were generated electronically and supplied likewise by SARS. The link has resulted in the expedient issuing of tax directives thus reducing the time between the receipt of benefit claims documents and the payment of such benefits.

WHAT OTHER MEMBERS DO

There are however, some members of the GEPF who, upon exiting the Fund, approach SARS personally to obtain manual tax directives, which are then supplied to the GEPF. In doing this, these members believe that they are assisting the GEPF to process their

ADVICE

Government Employees Pension Fund (GEPF)

exit documents faster. This however, only serves to complicate the process. In terms of the arrangement between SARS and the GEPF, all tax directives to the GEPF must be processed electronically. A manual tax directive is therefore not acceptable when processing a benefit payment.

When a manual tax directive has been issued, an electronic one cannot be issued before the manual one has been cancelled. The GEPF can therefore not request another tax directive from SARS while the member con-

cerned is still in possession of a manual tax directive. SARS will therefore require that the manual tax directive be returned to its offices for cancellation before the GEPF can request an electronic one. Needless to say such a process will result in the unnecessary delay of a process that otherwise would have taken a maximum of three days.

In light of the above, the GEPF requests its members to refrain from approaching SARS for a manual tax directive as this will only delay the processing of their benefits.

When we speak of a glorious African past, we tend to mention Mali. Its popular port, Timbuktu was not only a wealthy trading port, but also a centre for academics and scholars of religion, literature and science about approximately 500 years ago. Today, part of South Africa's relations with Mali is the recovery and documentation of this past for present and future generations.



Minister, Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma together with her Malian counterpart, Foreign Minister Moctar Ouane, co-chairing the Second Session of the South Africa-Mali Joint Commission for Co-operation.

IN MORE RECENT TIMES, if one thinks of Mali, one also thinks of "Operation Timbuktu" which is the first official cultural project of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (Nepad), the socio-economic revival plan of the African Union. South Africa has thrown its weight behind efforts to preserve the priceless Timbuktu manuscripts. These are ancient documents that hold the key to some of the secrets of the continent's history and cultural heritage.

The Timbuktu Manuscripts, some of which date back to the 13th Century, are Arabic and African texts that hark back to the city's glorious past. They detail how Muslim merchants traded in gold from West Africa to Europe and the Middle East in return for salt and other goods. Most importantly, the manuscripts point to the fact that Africa has a rich legacy of written

Mission Possible: South Africa Forges Further Relations with Mali

history, contrary to popular opinion that oral tradition alone preserved its heritage. Some of the manuscripts include mathematical and scientific texts covering astronomy, medicine and geomancy. While most are in Arabic, some are in indigenous languages such as Songhai and Hausa, written using Arabic script. They shatter the conventional historical view of Africa as a purely "oral continent".

A consortium of South African businessmen are part of the plan to

build a new library to house between 200 000 and 300 000 ancient manuscripts currently housed in 24 private libraries in and around the Malian city. Also part of the plan is the training of local librarians in the preservation of a treasure that was threatening, literally, to disintegrate.

Last year, after the conclusion of bilateral discussions between Presidents Thabo Mbeki and George Bush in Washington, the Foreign Affairs

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Minister, Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, proceeded to where she, together with her Malian counterpart, Foreign Minister Moctar Ouane, co-chaired the Second Session of the South Africa–Mali Joint Commission for Co-operation (SA-Mali JCC).

CONSOLIDATING THE AFRICAN AGENDA

While the JCC Session primarily took place within the context of South Africa's priority to strengthen bilateral political, economic and trade relations with Mali, it should be understood as part of our country's continuous effort to consolidate the African Agenda. Bilateral relations between South Africa and Mali are good and are based mainly on the Malian government's strong support for the African Renaissance initiative and NEPAD as well as its strong commitment to the promotion of democracy and good governance.

The visit was also seen as part of South Africa's effort to strengthen its economic diplomacy at both continental and global level. At a multilateral economic level, co-operation between South Africa and Mali in the gold mining industry is being pursued, inter alia within the context of initiatives such as the African Mining Partnership.

OPERATION TIMBUKTU

At the level of cultural diplomacy, the visit was also aimed at further "beefing-up" the Operation Timbuktu as a South African presidential project, co-ordinated by the Presidency and the Department of Arts and Culture through the National Archives in Pretoria. This aims to make good on an offer of help to the Malian government made by President Thabo Mbeki during a state visit in 2001. The project aims to preserve African thought and writing and to trace this particular history and have done so for centuries. The project dismisses stereotypes of projecting Africa as the continent of song and dance, where knowledge is only transmitted orally.

The Minister's visit occurred within the context of South Africa's priority to strengthen bilateral, political, economic and trade relations with Mali and subsequently the Consolidation of the African agenda. With her Malian



The Timbuktu Manuscripts

Trade figures between South Africa and Mali, to a large extent, reflect the activities of two major South African gold mining companies namely AngloGold and Randgold. The former operates three gold mining operations: Yatela (in the southwest of Mali), Sadiola (near the town of Kayes in the extreme west of Mali) and Morila (200km south of Bamako) which it operates jointly with Randgold. However, South Africa's main import products from Mali are textiles and textile articles. Eskom Enterprises was successful in winning the international bid in July 2001 for the hydro-electrical generation project in Manantali, a joint initiative between the governments of Mali (who will receive 51% of the output), Senegal (34%) and Mauritania (15%).

counterpart, Foreign Minister Moctar Ouane, Minister Dlamini Zuma signed the Agreed Minutes as a testimony on progress made in the co-operation. Issues discussed focused, amongst others, on a review of progress in the various areas of co-operation such as Agriculture, Arts and Culture, Defence, Education, Health, Minerals and Energy, Science and Technology, Trade and Industry and Transport. In this way, the discussions also provided a unique opportunity for two countries to reflect on international and regional issues of common concern and how to work towards mutual political, economic and cultural goals at this challenging time.

Both Ministers emphasised the need to strengthen existing co-operation and also looked into the possibilities of pioneering co-operation in the fields of gender co-operation as well as the environment. Our Minister

concluded her visit by paying a courtesy call on Malian President, General Amadou Toumani Toure and reiterated our country's commitment to ensuring the further strengthening of the already strong relations between the two countries.

If we continue to strengthen intra-Africa partnerships such as this one and, if, as fellow Africans, we continue to work hard towards the realisation of an African Renaissance, then the time will surely come when Africans will take pride in their intellectual accomplishments and Timbuktu will once more take its pride of place as a milestone in our history and on the road to African prosperity and sustained development.

By Directorate: Media Research, Analysis and Speechwriting

Minister's 2007 Opening of Parliament banquet

ON AN ANNUAL basis the Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma holds an Opening of Parliament banquet in honour of the members Diplomatic Corps. The event which over the years has become a highlight on the February calendar month of the Department is meant to provide an informal platform for the members of the Diplomatic Corps to engage with principals of the South African government particularly the Minister of Foreign Affairs. This year the banquet took place in Cape Town, Somerset West, at Vergelegen Wine Estate on 10 February 2007, a day after President Thabo Mbeki's State of the Nation Address.

The banquet was held under the theme of "Celebrating South Africa's Progressive role in the United Nations". With this in mind every aspect of the event symbolised sentiments of appreciation and gratitude to the heroes and heroines who were involved in paving the way for South Africa to ultimately occupy the non-permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). A pictorial exhibition was used at the event to showcase milestones and influential stalwarts who were and are still involved in enhancing South Africa's participation and contribution in the multilateral arena. The beautifully staged event presented class and elegance, boasting cabinet Ministers, members of parliament, captains of the industry and of course members of the Diplomatic Corps in attendance.

By Sewela Sebola



THE SIXTH SOUTH AFRICAN HEADS OF MISSION Conference (HOMC) took place from 11 – 16 February 2007 at the Lord Charles Hotel, Somerset West, Western Cape Province. The very important biannual Heads of Mission conferences aim to assess progress made over the preceding two years in respect of the achievements of departmental (and missions') goals and to strategise on how to advance new priorities identified annually by the Cabinet Lekgotla. Heads of Mission Conferences thus forms an important event on the calendar of serving Heads of Mission. The Conference was also planned to follow on President Mbeki's State of the Nation Address to Parliament, which was made on 9 February 2007. The State of the Nation Address therefore also served as the point of departure to guide the discussions during the week.

In order to develop a common understanding of the focus of the Department on South Africa's foreign policy the first day of the Conference was devoted to regional breakaways during which Head Office Business Units, and the Missions they are responsible for, discussed opportunities and challenges in the context of the IRPS Cluster priorities decided on during the Lekgotla of January 2007. The inputs from these breakaway meetings will form the basis of the departmental business plan and guide Heads of Mission in the development of their own business plans.

The Heads of Missions were addressed by the following Members of Cabinet and other officials:

President Thabo Mbeki; Deputy President P Mlambo-Ngcuka; Ministers Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, Trevor Manuel, Mandisi Mpahlwa, Charles Nqakula; Mr Danny Jordaan, CEO of South Africa's 2010 World Cup Local Organising Committee; Ms Yvonne Johnston, CEO of the International Marketing Council (IMC); Advocate Dali Mpofu, SABC Group CEO; and Mr Tony Trew, Deputy CEO of the GCIS.

Deputy Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Aziz Pahad and Sue van der Merwe, also attended the conference throughout and played important facilitating and supporting roles, especially

2007 6th Heads of Mission Conference

around the presence of the President, Deputy President and Ministers.

During the session with the President, which took the form of a question and answer, the many topics covered included South Africa's role in the African Union, the situation in Zimbabwe, Sudan, DRC, Latin America, relations with China and South Africa's non-permanent membership of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). This high level input by the President on important foreign policy issues provided valuable guidance for the use of Heads of Mission when conducting South Africa's foreign policy abroad.

During her inspiring address to the Conference, Deputy President Mlambo-Ngcuka focused on a mid-term review of the Government's Programme of Action. Commenting on Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South

Africa (ASGISA) one year on, the Deputy President emphasized that there were about four million extremely poor under- and unemployed South Africans to focus on who were, to begin with, predominantly unskilled. In order to achieve the targets of the 2014 Millennium Development Goals the economy had to grow, and the growth had to be shared. Bigger and bolder policy and programmes were needed to achieve these goals. Regarding Joint Initiative on Priority Skills Acquisition (JIPSA), the Deputy President mentioned that in partnership with all stakeholders, critical skills that are required for growth and the establishment of infrastructure, such as engineers, architects, quantity surveyors and technicians will be identified. The Deputy President also identified education as most critical for the short and long term sustainability of JIPSA and ASGISA.

The sessions with Minister Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, offered Heads of Mission the opportunity to get high level guidance on many issues not touched on by the President. The topics covered included the challenges facing the AU in the operationalisation of its structures, AU involvement in conflicts on the Continent, SADC, IBSA, relations between Africa and the EU, Latin America and China, and South Africa's non-permanent mem-

bership of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).

The very important input by Minister of Finance, Trevor Manuel, focused on the solid performance of the South African economy over the past few years, economic growth and development on the African Continent and some of the challenges South Africa faced in further accelerating growth in the country.

Making an input in respect of economic diplomacy the Minister of Trade and Industry, Mandisi Mpahlwa, informed the Conference that due to its growing economy, South Africa had a good entry point into the global economic system. He warned, however, that South Africa still faced numerous challenges. As an example he pointed out the consequences of moving away from deep structural issues, such as traditional reliance on commodities, and the problems posed by it to economic growth and the eradication of poverty.

Addressing the issue of crime Minister of Safety and Security, Chales Nqakula, informed the Heads of Mission that crime in South Africa could be grouped into two categories: firstly, social crimes that occur between people who know one another; and, secondly, serious and violent crimes that are motivated by greed and mostly

He (Minister Trevor Manuel) warned, however, that South Africa still faced numerous challenges. As an example he pointed out the consequences of moving away from deep structural issues, such as traditional reliance on commodities, and the problems posed by it to economic growth and the eradication of poverty.

involve organized crime such as bank robberies, cash in transit heists, etc. The Minister agreed that crime levels in South Africa were high. He stated that a lack of managerial skills in the SAPS was crippling its response to crime. The Minister emphasized the need for South Africans to deal with the "RDP of the soul". He emphasized that communities should become more involved in finding solutions to social crime.

Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Aziz Pahad, delivered the closing remarks at the Conference. In his conclusion, he mentioned that the new

world order that was emerging was unsustainable and that in the interest of humanity, the world should strive to build an international movement to fight for a world of peace, democracy, freedom from poverty, non-racism and non-sexism.

Apart from the presentations by Members of the Cabinet, the Conference also looked at preparations for 2010; branding South Africa internationally; the international strategies of the national broadcaster (SABC); and communication strategies towards renewal of Africa in a better world. The inputs by Mr Danny Jordaan, CEO of South Africa's 2010 World Cup Organising Committee, Ms Yvonne Johnston, CEO of the International Marketing Council, Adv Dali Mpofu, Group CEO of SABC and Mr Tony Trew of the GCIS provided the Heads of Mission the opportunity to exchange ideas on topical issues with the role players dealing directly with the issues, thereby being capacitated to further South African objectives in respect of these areas.

The Director-General, in his final remarks invited Heads of Mission to the next biannual HOMC expressing the hope that the 2009 Conference would take place in the new DFA building, construction of which was due to commence in April 2007.



Deputy President Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka flanked by Deputy Ministers Aziz Pahad (left) and Sue van der Merwe (right).

Heads of Mission (HoM) Conference Social Events

WELCOME BRAAI – 11 FEBRUARY 2007

THE 'WELCOME BRAAI' was hosted on the 11th of February 2006 at the Lord Charles lawns as it was the first day of the conference. The main aim of the event was to give the Ambassadors and High Commissioners a warm welcome home and to also entertain DFA senior managers before they start discussing the serious issues.

The welcome braai was sponsored by South African Breweries (SAB). They provided the marquee, African food, drinks and entertainment for the evening. The event was a casual relaxed evening as most of the delegates had just arrived.

The entertainment was provided by Loading Zone who played different kind of genres and made the guests get down and dance.



VALENTINES DINNER – 14 FEBRUARY 2007

The event was meant to show the HOM delegates that even if they are away from their loved ones the department still cared for them and valued their work. The event was semi-formal and the mood was to relax and have fun.

The event was sponsored by Distell and Sasol and was hosted at the Oude Libertas Wine Farm in Stellenbosch. Distell sponsored drinks and the venue while Sasol sponsored the catering, entertainment and sound.

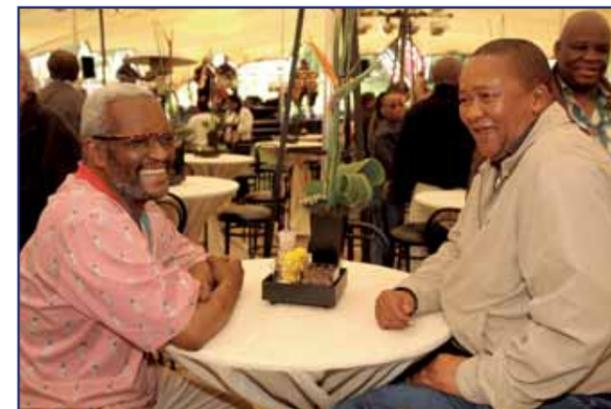
The performance for the evening was from the South Easter Quartet, playing Jazz music aimed at feeding the souls of our guests as it was Valentines Day.

FAREWELL GIG – 16 FEBRUARY 2007

The purpose of the event was to say goodbye to the delegates, especially the Excellencies, as it was the end of the deliberations and they were going back to their country of accreditation to implement what have been discussed throughout the conference.

The event was sponsored by Vodacom and SA Tourism. Vodacom paid for the catering, drinks and venue while SA Tourism paid for the entertainment and sound. The main performer for the day was the Nq-cukana Brothers who made the place small with their moving music. People danced until late in the evening.

By: Sibongile Mabasa



The Community Organisations Regional Network

THE 2ND TO THE 4TH OF FEBRUARY 2007 saw the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) implementing the President's call of "Deepening the debate." It took the form of a workshop that happened at the Burgers Park Hotel between DFA and civil society. Apart from the Community Organisations Regional Network (CORN) which comprises of thousands of community based organizations from different provinces, there were tertiary institutions, NGO representation, etc. The workshop was jointly hosted by the Department of Foreign Affairs and CORN which was attended by various government departments. To mention a few, Communications, Social Development, Agriculture and Land Affairs and SALGA.

OPENING

The workshop was opened by the Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs,

Dr NC Dlamini Zuma and attended by senior DFA officials including Ambassador Duarte who represented the department. The objectives of the workshop were:

- a) to decipher information from the government departments regarding the various programmes they have.
- b) To determine the role of civil society in aiding government to implement such programmes;
- c) To agree on establishing a partnership on certain programmes.

DFA was identified for its programmes e.g NEPAD, WSSD, IBSA, etc. A number of outcomes of the workshop were as a result of in depth discussions that took place over the 3 day period.

The parties shared knowledge on the government programmes that are meant for the eradication of poverty



(CORN)/DFA Workshop

and social development of the South African society. Even though private sector was not represented, their social responsibility programmes were identified as an initiative that is earmarked for poverty alleviation.

The departments that were in attendance undertook to ensure civil society participation in their programmes which are meant for the upliftment of society with DFA playing a facilitative role. Some of the programmes identified are going to be part of the Community Outreach Programme that has been developed by DFA. There will be ongoing communication and interaction with the units that are responsible for programmes which necessitate civil society participation. Such participation can only aid the acceleration of delivery and meeting the Batho Pele Principles that all government departments have compacted to comply with.

*By Nokuthula Khumalo
Director: Liaison Officer (Minister's office)*

SOME PEOPLE WRITE BETTER THAN OTHERS. Douglas Hurd, now Lord Hurd of Westwell, who held a number of positions in Conservative Governments in the United Kingdom, is also an accomplished novelist, and his writing ability is clearly evident in this autobiography. This and the fact that the book aims to give a personal account of the author's life until the time of his resignation as Foreign Secretary in 1995, make it highly readable, much more so than is usually the case with biographies of eminent politicians. This personal approach is enhanced by the fact that it is based on diaries kept from an early age from which the author regularly quotes, enhancing the reader's insight into his personal experiences and impressions of events and personalities, ranging from the three Prime Ministers under whom he served (Heath, Thatcher and Major) to foreign leaders from all parts of the world and also some more unsavoury characters like Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadic. Throughout the text details of the public figure's private life are revealed,

Douglas Hurd, *Memoirs, Abacus, 2004*

making for fascinating reading: it is for instance revealing to learn that even the great and good are constantly plagued by financial worries!

ABOUT THE BOOK

The book is divided into seven parts. The first deals with his childhood, school days, national service in the Army and university studies. Other parts deal with his entry into domestic politics as an official of the Conservative Party, his entry into Parliament (where he served first as a backbencher and later as a junior minister in the Foreign and Home Offices) and his elevation to Cabinet, first occupying the hot seat of Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and then serving as Home Secretary. For the present reviewer, however, the most interesting thread running through the book is the author's involvement in diplomacy, first as a young diplomat in postings such as Beijing, the United Nations in New York and Rome, and later, from

1989, as Foreign Secretary. Hurd served as the UK's top diplomat during one of the most challenging and intriguing periods of modern times: the fall of the Berlin Wall unleashed hitherto unknown forces onto the international stage, which resulted in the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the wars of Yugoslavian fragmentation, totally reshaping the European landscape. Also on the agenda were the position of a reunited Germany in Europe and a re-definition of the concept of international security resulting from the end of the Cold War, the territorial disintegration of states and a level of conflict unknown in Europe since the end of the Second World War. British diplomacy during this period was also focused on the onerous negotiation of the Maastricht Treaty and the domestic approval thereof by Parliament, the question of EU enlargement and the Allied military operation (Desert Shield/Desert Storm) to dislodge Iraq from its illegal occupation of Kuwait.

The complicated and nuanced negotiations with the People's Republic of China on the handover of Hong Kong to Chinese sovereignty is accorded a separate chapter.

Domestic politics are also dealt with in detail, with the description of Thatcher's fall from power and the consequent triangular leadership contest in which the author participated, making particularly fascinating reading. After Major's election Hurd continued to serve as Foreign Secretary, offering the opportunity to compare the vastly different leadership styles of Major and his illustrious predecessor.

Hurd's views on the civil wars in Bosnia and Croatia are especially noteworthy. He draws a distinction between the clear-cut moral and intellectual approaches that sufficed in dealing with issues such as German unification, Maastricht, Hong Kong and the Gulf War, as opposed to the ethical and intellectual problems besetting policy formulation against the background of large-scale human

suffering. This approach provides an insight into the doubts, fears and uncertainties of a policy-maker faced with wide policy options and only the vaguest of doctrinal contours under circumstances where any policy decision (like air strikes or the lifting of an arms embargo) may either result in the saving of civilian lives and a reduction of suffering, or in the opposite. This focuses attention on a somewhat unexplored but increasingly relevant theme in domestic and international politics: the responsibility of the policy-maker for the lives and well-being of civilians in foreign states. Furthermore, it illustrates the positive development that the debate on the politics, legality and ethics of humanitarian intervention has undergone since the time of Bosnia, when it was merely a vague concept, till the recent recognition of an international responsibility to protect vulnerable populations in the report of the UN's High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change.

A further noteworthy aspect of the book is the accurate depiction of the

reality of foreign policy formulation and execution as "an untidy tangle of different threads .. of meetings, paper submissions, telephone calls, journeys, surprises, hours of boredom, anxiety or relief all mixed together ..." (415). These remarks probably hold true for the operation of most modern foreign ministries. The influence of matters such as time pressures, information and issue overload, staff shortages, technical breakdowns, tiredness and human relationships on the daily conduct of diplomacy are sometimes underestimated in post facto analysis.

The book is lucidly written, and interspersed with humour and anecdotes, very readable. The author also never falls into the trap of self-justification, as is so often the case with political autobiographies. Those interested in politics, diplomacy or merely an account of an interesting and eventful life, will enjoy it.

*By Andre Stemmet
Law Advisor, Department of Foreign Affairs*

Heads of Mission Conference 2007

