



November 2007

dfa **Now**

Your voice to be heard



Minister, Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, with her Ghanaian counterpart, Mr Kofi Osei-Ameyaw and High Commissioner, Dr Lindiwe Mabuza at the Diaspora Conference

DEAR COLLEAGUES

Welcome to the November issue of DFA Now. Our focus this month is an article on the Diaspora Conference that was held in South Africa and hosted by our Minister Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma plus many interesting articles from head office as well as some from our Missions. We also take this opportunity to wish all DFA employees a Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year. May those of you who are going on leave enjoy this time spent with family and loved ones, and if you are travelling, please be safe. Our Minister and the Department appreciate your contribution towards the achievement of a better Africa in a better world and need you back next year.

Thank you also to those who have contributed articles and inputs throughout the past year to help make DFA Now a viable publication for the entire Department's staff. We are looking forward to receiving your inputs in 2008!

Festive Greetings!

Creative Corner

Dear Mama,

Your image is still on my mind, although I forgot your name. Sorry for that, but it is 16 years ago now that I saw you in 'Soweto at the sea'.

I think they also called it 'the red location', because of the color of its houses in very rusty corrugated iron. Were they not old army barracks before? Not only the houses, but everything was red: the soil, the sunset, the water.

But not the children. They went to school in clean costumes and dresses, with white socks and collars, as white as can be. How did you manage Mama?

As you had to go to the tap for water on a distance of half a kilometer? I was wondering.

And then I saw you demonstrating, together with other women. Demonstrating for better houses. The first life toyi-toyi march I saw. You seemed so full of strength and energy, as you were marching to the municipality building. You moved your heavy hips so free. Policecars and guns could not impress you, but you impressed me.

I carried your image with me for years, but only last summer I felt like finalising a series of paintings and drawings about you. I needed to look back on your strength in order to strengthen myself, as I felt sick and weak in that period.

Some people say toyi-toyi-times are over now.

I doubt it and I am sure that we will always need you, Mama. I cherish your strength and your determination to fight for a life for all the children and all human beings.

By Toos Van Liere

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Letter to mama toyi-toyi.



LRP



Tour



2007



Minister Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma hosted the African Diaspora Ministerial Conference that took place at Gallagher Estate in Midrand on 16-18 November. The Ministerial session was preceded by a meeting of Senior Officials held on 14-15 November.

The African Diaspora Ministerial Conference represented a culmination of 18 months of work where Regional Consultative Conferences were held all over the Diaspora, from Latin America, North America, Europe, the Caribbean and the African Union members meeting on the Diaspora held in Addis Ababa. A consolidated outcomes report was compiled from all these Regional Consultative Conferences and was presented at the Conference in Midrand. This document served as a basis to develop a programme of action in preparation for the African Diaspora Summit, to be held in 2008.

President Thabo Mbeki also addressed the Conference and stated that South Africa is pleased to be part of a process where together as Africans we have taken another step 'towards building a system of cooperation among ourselves that will increase our capacity to confront and solve the common problems we share, enabling us to assert our dignity as human beings'. President Mbeki also stressed the importance of cooperation between the African Diaspora in knowledge sharing and economic development, and made specific mention of development programmes of the African Union and NEPAD, stating that knowledge sharing can fast-track the implementation thereof.

The following themes were discussed at the conference; Global Dialogue, Peace and Stability; Economic Development, Regional Development and Integration; Women, Youth, Children and Vulnerable Groups and Historic, Social, Religious and Cultural Communalities.

The conference was held in plenary sessions where all the themes could be discussed by all the members and thus lend itself to broad participation

SOUTH AFRICA HOSTED THE AFRICAN DIASPORA MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE

By Elion von Wielligh



President Thabo Mbeki addressing the African Diaspora Ministerial Conference

by all. The Conference recognised that the Diaspora consultation process cannot only be an emotional and spiritual journey but also needs to be a transparent and concrete process with tangible and measurable results. Thus the Ministerial Conference produced a solutions orientated programme of action to develop partnerships between Africa and the Diaspora. These partnerships will include co-operation in political, economic and social spheres. More detail was given to discussions on tourism, culture, remittances and communication to issues of image and

mentality transformation, economic development, energy resources and economic development.

The Programme of Action to be further developed after this Ministerial Conference is to be adopted by the African Diaspora Summit next year together with a declaration outlining the way forward in this process of strengthening ties between Africans globally. An implementation plan will also be part of what is envisaged for the summit.

Conference Sponsored by MTN & ABSA

16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM CELEBRATED IN BELGIUM

By Mpho Boshego



Ms Frieda Groffy, a poet and staunch womens' rights activist during the celebration



Ms Mantsaye Ngwaila responsible for Culture and Tourism in the Brussels Embassy also participated in the celebration

The South African Embassy in Brussels observed the 16 Days of Activism for no Violence Against Women and Children Campaign on the 23 November 2007. This is a global campaign that South Africa has been a part of for 10 years. The Campaign started on 25 November (International Day of No Violence against Women) and it will run through to International Human Rights Day on 10 December. While the global campaign focuses on violence against women, South Africa added children to its campaign because of the realisation that children are also soft targets for abuse and the failure to protect them would be tantamount to disregarding its future.

The South African Embassy observed the start of the campaign by hosting a cultural night filled with music, poetry, art and a play illustrating the power and beauty of women and children. The Embassy emphasised what the South African Government has been propagating all along that the abuse of women and children, not only in South Africa but the world as a whole will not be tolerated. The event was well attended by organi-

sations supporting women and children's rights across Belgium and the diplomatic corps in Brussels. The attendance demonstrated how the people of the world feel about the abuse that some women and children in the world are subjected to. They came to join South Africa in saying enough is enough.

The event also focused on women not as victims but as pillars of strength not only for their children and communities but for themselves as well. Ms. Frieda Groffy who is an old friend of the democratic South Africa and a staunch women's rights activist spoke about the wonderful women she met in South Africa and how their experiences and hardships inspired her to write one of her books entitled *Universal Woman*. She spoke about the similarities between the women of the world and the importance of them having one voice in addressing the injustices that they are confronted with on a daily basis.

The event was moving as guests reflected on the poetry that was recited by Mr. Richard Adeolu and Ms Toos Van Liere. The poetry echoed the cries

of women and children demanding that abuse they have endured and are continuing to endure be stopped. Ms. Van Liere who is also an acclaimed artist and painter also exhibited her 2007 painting repertoire entitled *letter to mama toyi-toyi*. It speaks of the women she met during her many visits to South Africa; strong, unselfish and progressive in spite of the hardships they face on a daily basis. It speaks about the continuation of the struggle by women for complete emancipation from a society that continues to define them as weak and persists to break them.

The message that evening was simple and clear; let all of us stand together, men and women to stop the abuse of women and children in order to build a secure world.

The guests were not only treated to an art exhibition, a play and poetry recitals but also to the music of Olu-mide Toyinbo and his group. They enthralled the guests with their rhythmic African Drum beating. The night was a true celebration of the beauty of women and children through the most powerful tools of art.

DFA - SUPPORTED MALARIA EXPEDITION REACHES HALFWAY MARK AROUND AFRICA



Ambassador Isaac Kekana (pictured left), Kingsley Holgate (second from left) worked with the local Ministries of Health and Education and the Malaria Control Programme to distribute nets at a maternity clinic and a disabled's school, Conakry

Reaching the half-way mark of the "Africa Outside Edge Goodwill Expedition", South African adventurer and humanitarian, Kingsley Holgate, at a media briefing on 14 November was full of praise for the support and encouragement by the Department of Foreign Affairs, especially our missions along the route in Africa. Support for this humanitarian expedition is one of the "Outreach Programmes" of Public Diplomacy, working closely with Branch: Africa. Through this project, we are showing that South Africa cares for Africa and its peoples and focusing on our role as a reliable partner to create a better life for all on the Continent. As the Director-General, Dr Ayanda Ntsaluba said in his earlier letter of

support to the mission: "...the expedition is seen in support of one of the Government's foreign policy priorities – that South Africa is inextricably linked to the Continent and the consolidation of the African Agenda". Our missions has assisted amongst other things, with the distribution of mosquito nets, reading glasses and mobile libraries; securing of visas for various countries; assistance with border crossings and gaining access to some problematic areas.

During his 24 hour break from the rest of the expedition, Kingsley Holgate was in Johannesburg on 14 November to give feedback on the expedition's progress. He reported that the Scroll of Peace and Goodwill, which was first endorsed by former President Nelson Mandela in South Africa – has now been signed by 5000 influential people across Africa. Having surpassed the half-way mark reaching Dakar Senegal in mid-November, the expedition has completed 27 000 kilometers, crossing 17 countries in its goal of circumnavigating the Continent distributing 500 000 mosquito nets. The expedition has reached an estimated 5 million people in nearly 20 countries with the message of the "One Net One Life" malaria campaign, and is expected to return to South Africa by Africa Malaria Day on 25 April 2008.

At the media event in Johannesburg Kingsley Holgate said: "Please give my very best regards to the Africa Desk and the Department of Foreign Affairs team



Thembisile Majola-Emballo (middle), South African Ambassador to Senegal, and expedition leader Kingsley Holgate (right) handing over a symbolic mosquito net to the head of the malaria control program in Senegal (left)

that are helping to make this great humanitarian expedition so worthwhile, and proving to be of great assistance along the outside edge of Africa. The South African Department of Foreign Affairs can be proud of the support of the SA missions in this most exciting malaria prevention challenge ever. We couldn't do it without you."

Kingsley Holgate's diary has captured the expedition's experiences since its departure in Cape Town in April 2007 (See www.getawaytoafrica.com).

Some of Kingsley Holgate's experiences reflect his interaction with and support from South African missions along the way and is quoted herewith:

- **Namibia:** "The South African mission in Windhoek's assistance in securing approval to travel through restricted areas along the coast was invaluable.
- **Gabon:** "At a media function in Libreville additions to the Scroll continued as the South African Ambassador, Jomo Khasu and representatives of the Embassies of Sao Tome and Principe, Egypt, Algeria, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea Conakry and the Democratic Republic of Congo added their signatures and messages.";
- **Ghana:** "The South African High Commissioner to Ghana, Rapulane Sydney Malekane at a dinner party in our honour wrote this message: 'Thank you for flying the flag of our Rainbow Nation in a noble mission of saving and improving lives'";
- **Guinea:** "The South African Department of Foreign Affairs can be proud of the support of the SA missions in this most exciting malaria prevention challenge ever. The one net one life campaign in Guinea was outstanding. The campaign events were attended by South African Ambassador to Guinea, Isaac Kekana, who personally assisted in the distribution of life saving nets to schools and clinics. The team has also donated 200 mosquito nets which will be distributed by the Embassy in Conakry".
- **Senegal:** "To the South African Ambassador to Senegal, Thembisile Majola - Emballo, and her competent staff: "Many thanks for your support, not only for the much appreciated biltong and boerewors, but also for caring for the people of Africa!". The Ambassador wrote these words in the Scroll: 'A very personal experience that has touched many people in a most direct, personal life saving way. I salute this noble expedition and want to express my deep respect and pride in the humanitarian work you are achieving at a great deal of personal cost. I wish you Godspeed on your journey, and am proud that you fly the South African flag, representing South African resilience, a caring spirit and a will to succeed. Hambani kahle!'.



Minister, Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma and her Angolan counterpart, Joao de Miranda officiating at the opening session of the Joint Commission of Co-operation

DEPUTY MINISTER AZIZ PAHAD'S MEDIA BRIEFING: 20 NOVEMBER 2007

CHOGM

President Mbeki will leave to attend the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in Uganda. He will leave on Friday and the meeting will take place from Friday to Sunday. The theme this year is "Transforming Commonwealth Societies to achieve political, economic and human development." Deputy Minister Sue van der Merwe will be attending the Ministerial segment of the meeting.

SA-ANGOLA JOINT COMMISSION

Minister Dlamini Zuma as you know has left for Luanda Angola where she will co-chair together with her Angolan counterpart, the 2nd Session of the South Africa – Angola Joint Commission for Co-operation which will take place from today till tomorrow. During

this meeting three agreements including an agreement on cooperation in the petroleum sector will be signed. The other agreements, an agreement on the promotion of tourism and a declaration of intent on the waiving of visas for ordinary passport holders will also be signed.

Minister Dlamini Zuma will be accompanied by Minister Buyelwa Sonjica of Minerals and Energy and Deputy Minister Malusi Gigaba of Home Affairs and very many senior officials from various departments like the Departments of Health, Agriculture, Defence, Trade and Industry, Minerals and Energy, Social Development will all form part of the Joint Commission.

SUDAN

There are more reports coming out of increasing tensions between the South and the North, the Government of National Unity that was formed after the Comprehensive Peace Agreement has still not been re-instituted.

The South Ministers are still boycotting it and therefore it becomes very important to try to ensure that we get a solution to the Darfur problem which is impacting negatively on the broader Comprehensive Peace Agreement in Sudan. We have briefed you on several occasions about the deployment of UN-African hybrid operation. And once again the UN Under Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations has again indicated that if they do not get the necessary pledges from countries especially on heavy equipment it will be very difficult to deploy the hybrid force as scheduled. And for us this is very difficult because you cant continuously raise the issue of increasing violence without taking the necessary steps to ensure that there is a sufficiently strong force to create the climate for violence to subside and end, and therefore create the climate for the political processes to unfold. And so we are concerned about the Under Secretary-General's view that there has not been enough com-

mitment for a ground transport unit, which includes 18 transport helicopters, air support and six helicopters for light tactical purposes. And we agree fully with him, and it tells a sad story on the commitment to Darfur, and he says, "Frankly I think there is an immense tragedy that has unfolded in Darfur and now its up to the countries that care about Darfur to really make a commitment that will make a difference", and that he calls for concrete actions. We have on really many occasions stated the same that we cannot keep talking of a crisis in Darfur and keep talking of the violence that is increasing without ensuring that those that have the capacity do provide the capacity so that the hybrid force can be in place as scheduled.

Of-course there are still problems arising about the nature of the hybrid force. Thailand, as we said last week, has offered to provide an infantry battalion, Nepal is willing to contribute a force reserve and sector reserve unit and the Nordic countries of Sweden, Norway and Denmark have offered to send an engineering unit. There is clearly according to the Under Secretary-General no agreement between the Sudanese Government and the AU and the UN of utilising these forces. As I said last week, the argument still is very strong that see what we can get from the African forces before we can look at other contributions. We would urge all sides, and that's the three sides, the UN, the AU and the Sudanese Government, to really resolve that outstanding matter of the composition of the forces as soon as possible.

SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

For reasons of its unique history of the struggle for human rights and human dignity, the issue of human rights continues to occupy a major political space in South Africa's foreign policy priorities.

Because of different approaches and influences differences will arise in



Deputy Minister Aziz Pahad during a media briefing at the Union Building

the Human Rights Council, the General Assembly and the Security Council:

South African human rights policy is based on the four pillars of respect for, promotion, protection and fulfilment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms;

Some countries never talk of the issue of fulfilment of human rights, i.e. practical enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms;

South Africa believes in the inextricability between economic, social and cultural rights and civil and political rights;

Some countries only emphasize civil and political rights and do not regard the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights as an instrument elaborating basic human rights. For these countries economic, social and cultural rights are not rights but merely basic needs of nations and peoples;

South Africa believes in the justifiability of economic, social and cultural rights;

Some countries believe that only civil and political rights are justifiable;

South Africa strongly believes that the enjoyment of civil and political rights is not possible if not accompa-

nied by a corresponding commitment to and practical enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights. In the past 10 years, South Africa has been one of the leading countries in championing the cause for the realization of the right to development and that we believe is an element of human rights for all peoples anywhere. And that for us the fundamentals of South African human rights law is for the achievement of equality and human dignity through sustainable development, eradication of poverty and underdevelopment and the primacy of achieving the Millennium Development Goals;

Given this factor there is not sufficient understanding of how the Human Rights Council works and there's always concentration only in one of the ten items and this is when some countries decide to bring up what is called country resolutions. And for a long time the Human Rights Commission and now the Human Rights Council gets bogged down into serious differences because of the perceptions of the countries of the south that countries of the north are selectively bring-

Continue on pg 8...

... Continue from pg 7

ing countries onto the table and there is not sufficient discussion of what outcomes has to be of what issues are being brought into the Human Rights Council and increasingly being taken into the Security Council. And so we are arguing that if we look at all the ten separate items within the Human Rights Council you will see there are many other issues on human rights that all the countries that are committed to defending human rights and enhancing human rights are involved in South Africa's track record can never be challenged on those issues. And so we've had some interesting experiences and we'll mention in passing a few which keeps coming and keep being country positions being taken up by the more developed countries.

CHINA

On China, it is our experience that the Chinese resolution on human rights before the Human Rights Commission and now the Human Rights Council condemning human rights in China comes every four years. And we don't know whether it's a coincidence that the four intervals also happen to coincide with Presidential elections in the United States of America. And therefore we do ask the question, does this mean that China only violates, if they are accused of violating human rights, in intervals of four years? We don't understand why it coincides with the elections in the USA.

IRAN

Another example that we've been experiencing relates to the EU resolution on violation of human rights in Iran for the last 20 consecutive years and this has been sponsored mainly by the European Union. And then suddenly it was discontinued without consultation or agreement with other members of the Commission. And they then decided at this stage that there should be a bilateral forum between Brussels and Teheran on this issue. It is only when

these discussions between the EU and Teheran failed, that then Canada introduced a resolution on Iran. This resolution was not taken to the Commission in Geneva, but it was introduced to the Third Committee of the General Assembly in New York. And we've been consistently arguing that we should keep it where we must, that is with the Human Rights Commission in Geneva and we cannot understand why it has been taken to the Third Committee of the General Assembly in New York.

I give these examples because this indicates the difficulties we have in dealing with such issues in the multilateral institutions. What has now happened, I tried to indicate its linked somewhat to the Durban Conference on Racism and now the Review Conference. There's been concerted efforts in some sectors to demonize South Africa for its strong resistance to the double standards, selectivity and politicization of the approach of human rights which has now been taken in the entire UN system of human rights.

And so it is our view that the current trends to demonize South Africa's human rights record emanate principally from our total rejection of an approach which protects some violators from the developed countries and only works to identify specific countries they identify to bring in what we call country resolutions within the Human Rights Council.

AND SO LET ME GIVE AN EXAMPLE:

ACCREDITATION OF GAY AND LESBIAN NGOS

Even our papers run many articles that South Africa opposed the accreditation of gay and lesbian NGOs to gain consultative UN status. Nobody checked with us and therefore were completely ignorant of the UN meth-

ods of work and Rules of Procedure. The issue that was brought to vote on the gay and lesbian NGOs getting consultative status was not on the accreditation but specifically on whether the correct procedures were followed. And it was on this technical vote that South Africa voted in the affirmative and indeed we were correct in voting in the affirmative on processes rather than the substance. And so therefore we did not vote to exclude gay and lesbian NGOs from accreditation. Our Constitution commits us to defend this position, we will always defend that position. But we are always clear that we must always follow correct procedures in order to achieve the objectives.

MYANMAR

On Myanmar you've heard our position before that this issue was brought to the Security Council and we've argued that it came to us without any consultation and we've argued that it must go back to the Human Rights Council which is the right forum for handling this matter. As you know there's been significant developments on Myanmar since the Security Council, what I can only call misunderstanding of South Africa's position. The Human Rights Council convened a Special Session on Myanmar on 1 October 2007. The outcome of the Special Session was a consensus document which ensured that the Special Rapporteur of the HRC on the Situation in Myanmar was allowed entry into the country and as we know he's been visiting Myanmar, visiting all the different forces in Myanmar. And I believe this is a correct approach, depoliticising the issue in that sense that it doesn't look as if countries are bringing in what is called the interests of that particular moment and trying to force two resolutions. We can get consensus which can lead to results. And this is also proven by the Security Council statement on Myanmar which was made just a few days ago on 14 November



Ibrahim Gambari (left), UN Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi

which welcomed the positive development that have been taking place like the release of some detainees, the contacts between Minister Aung Kyi as liaison officer and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, and the decision to allow Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to meet with key members of her National League for Democracy Party.

“RAPE” RESOLUTION IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Now let me deal with an issue that has been totally misunderstood or distorted and that's the adoption of a resolution in the Third Committee of the General Assembly entitled “Elimination Rape and Other Forms of Sexual Violence in all their Forms and Manifestations, including in Conflict and Related Situations” that's a compromise agreement that has come. The background to all of this, was that the draft resolution which was introduced by the United States of America (USA) and many countries saw it as having

problems because it was condemning rape when perpetrated for political or military purposes only and asserted that rape was used as an instrument of State Policy in these situations. For many delegations they saw this as another attempt to politicise issue, in this case rape and also as a selective targeting of certain Countries. And it is within the Africa Group, that many countries took exception to the views expressed in the draft resolution. It was not South Africa leading this frontal attack as has been said.

Our view was essentially that the draft resolution created two categories of rape, that is rape by military and militia groups and rape by civilians. It was our view that a more comprehensive resolution was required on such an important issue of rape. South Africa, together with other Africa delegations requested the USA to amend its draft resolution to include the elimination of rape in all its forms and manifestations and not just where rape is perpetrated for political or military purposes. The African delegations were supported by Latin America and Asia who also called for a balanced text. So it was not a rejection of the resolution, it was an attempt to ensure that we have a

balanced approach on this so we can get movement on this. And Angola on behalf of the Africa Group (Chair of the month) introduced amendments to the text that sought to balance the text by making certain that there was no politicization of rape. A number of other organisations also proposed changes to the text, such as the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), who sought protection from rape for women and girls living under foreign occupation.

And indeed we, the Africa Group, argued supported by Latin America and Asia that it is important for the General Assembly to send a strong and non-politicized message that rape is a brutal, despicable and violent act whether perpetrated by civilians, the military or armed groups and that the UN must avoid sending out a message that could be misunderstood as suggesting different categories of rape. We also wished to address the issue of assistance to victims of rape which was omitted from the USA text. Because it is our view that resolutions like these are passed and if they are very limited do not have the impact they should and after those resolutions are passed victims of rape are quickly forgotten and their ordeals after they've been raised in resolutions are completely ignored. And as I say we then with many other countries sought to change the initial US draft. And it is I think credit to the initial drafters that after lots of discussions, the African draft was then the basis on which a more substantive resolution on rape was adopted by the General Assembly. It was by consensus which meant following the correct position, the correct tactical approach. Having a more comprehensive approach to rape we were able to have comprehensive resolution which brought in every country in the world including the major developed countries. And so this resolution adopted by the Third Committee on 15 November 2007 we believe is correct because it condemns rape in all its forms and manifestations, including in situations of conflict.

SECOND SESSION OF JOINT COMMISSION BETWEEN SOUTH AFRICA AND BELGIUM



Director-General, Dr Ayanda Ntsaluba co-chaired the Plenary Session

The second meeting of the Joint Commission between the Republic of South Africa and the Kingdom of Belgium was held in Pretoria on 24 and 25 October 2007 to review progress since the first session of the Commission on 10 November 2006 in Belgium. The meeting consisted of a Plenary Session co-chaired by Dr. Ayanda Ntsaluba, Director-General of the Department of Foreign Affairs of South Africa and by Ambassador Jan Grauls, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Federal Public Service of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Co-operation of Belgium, followed by work sessions of the Committees on Political Issues, Economic Matters, Defence and Development Co-operation. The relationship between Belgium and South Africa is strong and flourishing. Since the previous session it has also been characterized by increased consultation between the two parties as Non Permanent Members of the United Nations Security Council. Both delegations reviewed political, economic and social developments in their respective

“Since 2006 Belgian exports to South Africa grew by 12% and reached 1,078 billion €, breaching the 1 billion target for the first time in the two countries’ trade history”

countries and regions, they paid attention to the challenges ahead and identified new areas of bilateral co-operation and trilateral commitment in other parts of Africa. Belgium’s Federal Government and the Regional Governments, in particular Flanders, gave special attention to South Africa’s challenges regarding economic and social development and both sides agreed that capacity building and skills development to develop the Second Economy will remain crucial issues in the immediate future.

POLITICAL COMMITTEE

The Political Committee discussed recent political developments with regard to SADC and AU/NEPAD. Both parties noted the positive developments in the area of peace and security and the growing democratisation of Africa. South Africa welcomed the continued involvement of the EU and the UN in addressing the peace and security challenges in Africa. Belgium reaffirmed its support through the EU for the AU, the establishment of the African Peace and Security Architecture and the AU’s socio-economic programme, NEPAD. It also expressed its appreciation for South Africa’s mediation efforts in Africa. Other issues discussed included recent developments in the EU, EU-SA Strategic Partnership and TDCA Review, Joint EU-Africa Strategy/ EU-Africa Summit and EU-SADC Economic Partnership Agreement. The parties also discussed trilateral co-operation where they reiterated their declared commitment to trilateral cooperation in an active part-

nership. They resolved to identify concrete proposals such as enhancing the capacity of Customs, Public Administration, the CEPGL Centre for Agricultural Research, SSR and Institution building including at Provincial levels.

ECONOMIC COMMITTEE

The Committee noted the significant progress made between Belgium and South Africa with regard to bilateral trade. Since 2006 Belgian exports to South Africa grew by 12% and reached 1,078 billion €, breaching the 1 billion target for the first time in the two countries’ trade history. During the same period, Belgium imported 1,477 billion € of South African goods, an 8.72% growth compared to 2005. The figures reflect the strength of SA-Belgian economic relations, and also echo the huge potential for further growth. It is therefore important that both countries further commit to the promotion of bilateral trade and investment. Both delegations agreed to explore further ways to encourage economic development in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Energy

The Committee recognises that strengthening bilateral energy cooperation, especially in areas of energy efficiency and renewable energy, is of benefit for the environment and the economic development of the two countries. Both parties expressed willingness to explore modalities for cooperation to enhance consultation and information exchange on policies, strategies, technologies, projects in areas of energy conservation and renewable energy.

This will create opportunities for energy cooperation between enterprises of the two countries in these areas.

Customs Co-operation

The two parties reported on the excellent co-operation and progress in the field of customs and underlined the importance of this key project in the further development of our bilateral trade relations. Parties also discussed possibilities for trilateral cooperation in capacity building in the customs area in the DRC. With regard to possible future cooperation in other areas the Direct Air Links issue was discussed and both delegations welcomed the re-opening of a cargo flight between Belgium and South Africa, operated by the Belgian airline company Cargo-B, with the local support of South African forwarding agents. The opening of this cargo link will considerably contribute to the growth of our bilateral economic relations. Both delegations agreed that they should continue to support any private initiative to re-establish a full regular passenger service between our two countries.

DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION COMMITTEE

The Committee on Development Cooperation in their discussions emphasized the importance of aligning ODA funding to the government's development agenda, sectoral strategic plans and budget priorities including sub regional and African development commitments. It was noted that the SA/EU Country Strategy Paper Multi annual Indicative Programme 2007 – 2013 (CSP MIP) was recently signed with the participation and endorsement of 11 EU Member States including Belgium with focus on employment creation amongst other things.

DEFENCE COMMITTEE

During the meeting, both Parties shared information and experiences on the ongoing external operational commitments (participation in UN Mandated Peace Missions), potential future trilateral military co-operation in the Great Lakes Region, future Air Force-to-Air Force co-operation, future Navy-to-Navy co-operation, Current and future military-to-military co-operation focusing on high-level visits, exchanges of students and instructors and exchange of intelligence.



DFA officials and Dr Idranie Ram from Regenesys Management at the Brooklyn Guest House

DFA officials attend Report Writing Course

Twenty officials from the Department attended a Report Writing Skills Course at the Brooklyn Guest House held from 29-31 October. The course was organised by the Directorate: Generic Skills Development and was presented by Dr. Idranie Ram from Regenesys Management.

The course was presented in an informal but holistic manner that takes into account the complex nature and rapidly changing circumstances under which officials have to work. Since report writing is such an integral part of the work done in Missions and at line function positions, it is of utmost importance that DFA officials are trained in skilfully compiling relevant well writing reports that can keep the Department abreast of an ever-changing environment, at home and abroad. A total of 80 applicants applied for this course and serves as an indication of the awareness amongst officials of the importance of proper writing skills needed within the DFA. Though only twenty officials could be accommodated at this course, the other applicants will

be given a chance to attend future courses.

The intensive course included the following topics: Communication; the do's and don't of report writing; the generic components of reports; diagramming as an analytical tool, important report writing tips, information from data, proposals and business plans; guidelines for a project plan report and a project progress report as well as guidelines for impact assessment reports, research reports and project evaluation reports. The twenty participants shared their views of how these generic models can be applied to DFA requirements and they even had the chance to create their own reports that were presented to the group and discussed thereafter. At the conclusion of the course Dr. Idranie Ram praised the DFA officials for their lively participation in the course work and the lively debates regarding relevant issues pertaining to their training. She stated that with such enthusiastic attendees, she is positive that this course will have definite impact in the work of DFA.

Where were you...?

