

Draft
Joint Statement
On the Second Session of the South Africa – Tunisia High-Level Political and Diplomatic
Consultations
Pretoria, 29 September 2023

The Second Session of the High-Level Political and Diplomatic Consultations between the Republic of South Africa and the Republic of Tunisia took place on 29 September 2023. Her Excellency Dr Grace Naledi Pandor, Minister of International Relations and Cooperation invited His Excellency Mr. Nabil Ammar, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Migration, and Tunisians Abroad of the Republic of Tunisia to the Republic of South Africa, Pretoria, for a Working Visit.

South Africa congratulated Tunisia on UNESCO's addition of the beautiful island of Djerba to the latest list of World Heritage sites. This is a significant development towards the global preservation of historic sites. On bilateral relations, the Ministers expressed the need to further strengthen bilateral relations between the two countries. They agreed that necessary work towards the convening of the 6th Joint Bilateral Commission (JBC) should commence. In addition, they indicated that the finalisation of a Protocol on Regular Diplomatic Consultation ought to reflect this cooperation.

As member states of the global community, the Ministers concurred that it was essential to utilise the Political Consultations and the JBC mechanism towards the strengthening of bilateral cooperation and discuss sub-regional and international issues of mutual concern, with a specific emphasis on Africa, its economic development and political standing, sovereignty, solidarity and place in the world. To that end, Ministers agreed to seek collaboration with fellow African countries in order to promote continental peace and stability, economic integration, and sustainable development. They also reflected on the necessity to address the root causes of irregular migration.

On bilateral issues:

The Ministers emphasised that the revived Joint Bilateral Commission (JBC) would be propelled by practical Economic Cooperation activities whose Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is anticipated for signature between the Ministers of Trade and Industry at a later stage.

The Ministers encouraged the continuation of deepening relations between their respective domestic regions across Provinces, Governorates and Special Economic Zones, where at least five MoU were signed between South Africa's Province of the Eastern Cape and Tunisia's

Governorates of Medenine and Gabes, as well as various economic institutions during bilateral meetings that took place in Tunisia between 9-16 September 2023.

It was noted that preparations for the signing of MoU's for Economic Cooperation, as well as in the sector of Agriculture were at their advanced stages. The Ministers expressed with satisfaction, fruitful discussions towards the launching of the long-awaited bilateral Business Council.

Furthermore, Cooperation Agreements in Tourism, as well as in the Arts and Culture, needed their respective Implementation Plans of Action finalised and ready for signatures on the next available opportune moment.

The Ministers resolved to ensure that the above initiatives would find the necessary expression before and/or during the signing ceremony of the 6th Session of the JBC in 2024, in Pretoria.

On regional issues:

The Ministers deliberated on a wide range of issues of significance to the continent. They agreed on the need for the continent to Silence the Guns and to work towards the implementation of Agenda 2063. The Ministers further expressed concern at the actions of unconstitutional changes of government on the continent, as manifested by military coups d'état. They also highlighted the Implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area as an important imperative towards Africa's development and the opportunities it provides for deepened Intra-African trade.

Minister Pandor thanked Tunisia on the hosting of the successful TICAD8 Summit in August 2022 where South African researchers were conferred with medical awards. They reflected on the spectra of critical and necessary opportunities for collaboration on medical matters both bilaterally and across the continent.

On International Issues:

The Ministers agreed that currently there are existential challenges facing humanity and threatening its existence globally due to climate change, as evidenced by recent natural disasters both in Africa and the world-over. The Ministers confirmed their determination to a reformed United Nations as a premier multilateral institution and which should be more democratic, representative, and efficient, capable of promoting a more equitable world order conducive to co-development, co-prosperity, stability and lasting peace for all.

The two countries advocate for a world based on more balanced and equitable relations and called for intensified partnerships and cooperation.

The Ministers reiterated the support of both countries for the cause of the Palestinian people and called for the acceleration of the Middle East Peace Process in order to find a long lasting resolution to the conflict.

The Ministers also reflected on the 15th BRICS Summit recently held in Sandton, South Africa. They recognised the important role played by this formation and called for a deepened partnership between BRICS and African Countries.

At the conclusion of the Official Visit, Minister Nabil Ammar expressed sincere appreciation and deep gratitude to Minister Pandor, to the Government and the People of the Republic of South Africa, for the warm reception and gracious hospitality accorded to him and to the entire delegation of the Republic of Tunisia during the visit.

Issued in Pretoria, South Africa, on 29th September 2023.