



**Budget Vote Speech by Deputy
Minister of International Relations and
Cooperation, Mr. Marius Fransman to
the National Assembly – Tuesday, 31
May 2011**

Honourable Speaker,

Honourable Chair and Members of the Portfolio Committee on International Relations and Cooperation,

Honourable Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Ms. Maite Nkoana-Mashabane,

Your Excellencies Ambassadors, High Commissioners and Representatives of International Organizations,

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Fellow South Africans,

Comrades and Friends

We have just returned from the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Ministerial Conference in Bali (Indonesia), where our Minister also participated in the 50th year Commemorative session of this important organization of the “non-aligned”. This historic occasion affords us the opportunity to address the issue of relevance and to raise some strategic questions about where South Africa finds itself in the development trajectory of international relations including:

1. Is our diplomacy relevant in the new world order?
2. Has our model of diplomacy kept track with the new and ever-changing global realities?
3. Is our diplomatic corps (core) appropriately equipped to deal with the lightning speed of change that we are witnessing in the world?
4. What are we doing to ensure that International Relations doesn't remain foreign and inaccessible to the ordinary citizen?

How the world of international diplomacy has changed since the launch of NAM in 1961. The key question, then and now, is the challenge to remain relevant and to ensure that we are able to respond in real time to unfolding

global events.

In 1990 under Apartheid South Africa had full diplomatic ties with thirty-nine countries; that number increased to sixty-nine in 1993, and to at least 147 in 1995. The key question is whether our administration, systems, policies and programme priorities kept pace of the increasing demand and relevance of international relations and positioning South Africa as a serious player in the new world order.

Cde Speaker, As South Africans, we remain eager to see progress in our Continent of Africa in the areas of peace and security; economic and infrastructural development; training and skilling of Africans; putting an end to poverty and illiteracy; popularizing democracy and good governance; and ending wars and internecine battles.

In our various interactions with our stakeholders, we have defined our roles in Africa and the world, as that of bridging the space between the powerful and the powerless in the international system; regional peacemaking; supporting the objective of international peace and security; shaping the 21st century to be a century of Africa's political, social and economic renewal; and ensuring that a rules-based system is established, which limits the possibility of unilateral action by major powers.

Honourable Speaker, Our first foreign policy priority speaks to *the Consolidation of the African Agenda*. This agenda entails amongst others, the need for Africa's economic growth and development; Africa's economic integration at the regional and sub-regional levels; trade and investment; and democratization and good governance.

As a practical attestation to our commitment to the political revival of our Continent, South Africa, in its continued support to the Pan African Parliament (PAP), proudly hosts the PAP. We are pleased to note that the PAP has successfully convened its 4th Ordinary Session in May 2011, in Midrand. We also wish to report to this House that, currently the protocol on the establishment of the PAP is being reviewed within the context of the transformation of the African Union Commission into an Authority.

While the PAP continues to play an important role in entrenching democracy and good governance, South Africa will also continue supporting the programmes of the African Peer Review Mechanism. We will also continue prioritizing our participation with the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), because we view NEPAD as the clearest description of our national interests on the Continent.

Honourable Speaker, Over the last 16 years, with South Africa's responsibility increasing in our bilateral and multilateral relations, we have steadily built a fully-fledged Branch for Diplomatic Training, Research and Development (DTRD). Our main focus is to produce well-rounded diplomats, who will be able to advance South Africa's national interests and defend its foreign policy priorities, principles, ambitions and pronounce on its values.

Our DTRD also seeks to focus on building our ability to engage with our non-state actors, especially our think tank institutions – with whom we share a deep patriotic sense of passion on matters of foreign policy theory and practice. Furthermore, the DTRD ensures that DIRCO continues to interact with broad civil society, in identifying global trends, sharing views on the implications of our foreign policy, and developing approaches that could be helpful in the resolution of the challenges of today's world.

In this context I also want to emphasise the critical role that the private sector needs to play in advancing our national interest as their engagements in the continent intensifies and spreads further afield.

Cde Speaker, In an effort to contribute to the strengthening of our SADC regional integration, for the first time, SADC members have been invited and some have responded positively in sending their diplomats to study with our government officials towards a Master's degree in Diplomacy with our Diplomatic Academy. This Masters programme is delivered in partnership with the University of Pretoria. It is my pleasure to highlight that officials from our provinces too, are also participating in this programme which seeks to enhance the quality and performance of senior South African diplomats in their duties.

It is also imperative to reiterate, Speaker, DIRCO's commitment to job creation and the development of our youth. In this regard, our Cadet and Learnership programmes have again admitted a group of young South African graduates who will be groomed to be effective public servants and diplomats respectively.

We continue to work closely with PALAMA in improving the quality of our senior managers, through the Executive Development Programme, so as to contribute towards improved delivery by our government. The Diplomatic Academy continues to work tirelessly with the DTI to improve the skills of our diplomats so that they can promote and facilitate South Africa's development effectively, through increased investment, trade and development assistance into our country. We remain committed to producing diplomats that are well-grounded and able to respond to the challenges of modern diplomacy, especially in the sphere of economics.

Cde Speaker, In Minister Maite's 2010-2011 Budget Vote Speech, mention was made of a Draft White Paper on South Africa's Foreign Policy. The Foreign Policy White Paper notes that:

- We have been remarkably successful in promoting the African Agenda in the last fifteen years;
- acknowledges that the proliferation of new formations, including emerging powers among the countries of the South, has introduced new dynamics in geopolitics;
- in the context of the North-South cooperation, it acknowledges that whilst emerging powers have managed to lift millions of people out of poverty, there are still growing inequalities between and within states;
- notes that challenges facing the world in the 21st century are complex and

global in nature, and that no single country or few countries can address them on their own; and

- comes to the conclusion that the often-times ineffectiveness of the AU is due to lack of common interpretation of common values among countries in the continent, and the effect of dependence which lends common positions to the vagaries of realpolitik, with countries pawning the policy independence to the highest bidder.

We wish to re-assure this august gathering that our domestic priorities and national interests continue to inform our international engagements. In our effort to rise to the Minister's call to have "our foreign policy assessed against the weight of rising expectations", we have ensured that it becomes a product of extensive inputs that were compiled through consultative processes.

Cde Speaker, Plans are at an advanced stage for the establishment of a Foreign Policy Council to be referred to as the South African Council on International Relations (SACOIR). This will be an advisory council on international relations, to again strengthen our resolve to make our foreign policy as inclusive and participatory as possible.

Cde Speaker, arising out of the ANC's Polokwane Conference resolutions of 2007 that calls for the creation of the South African Development Partnership Agency (SADPA) ensuring that our national interest is protected and advanced at all times and that we deal effectively with conditionalities normally attached to development aid. I am pleased to inform you that we envisage SAPDA to be operational during the last quarter of 2011, and in the years to come, we will seek to build its capacity as the pre-eminent authority on development in Africa.

Honourable Members, you have noted the Minister's address with reference to the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change COP17/CMP7 in Durban between the end of November and the second week of December this year.

As we move forward towards the conference, governments need to push ahead this year both to complete the concrete work they agreed in Cancun and address issues that are still to be concluded, charting a way forward that will ensure renewed success in Durban. If they move forward in the continued spirit of flexibility and compromise that inspired them in Cancun, then they can make significant new progress in 2011.

We must also resolve fundamental issues over the future of the Kyoto Protocol beyond 2012 - the only existing agreement where almost all industrialised countries agreed internationally-binding commitments to reduce emissions over time.

Cde Speaker and Honourable Members; As part of our efforts to ensure that we have the relevant people with requisite skills and expertise to make the difference for South Africa, we have ensured that we fill most of our key Management positions. We are in the process of finalising the remaining few. Let me take this opportunity to thank Dr Ayanda Ntsaluba for the

sterling work he has done over the past decade as well as all management and staff who contributed in this respect. Allow me also to express my appreciation to Mr Jerry Matjila for stepping into the breach as the new DG. He brings with him many years of experience in this arena and a clear sense of the strategic nature of the task at hand.

In an effort to address the general welfare of our officials, we continue to provide care and support to our employees and their families both at Head Office and Missions. Amongst others, we have established a dedicated Spousal Support Office in order to ensure a special focus on the spouses.

I want to emphasise that whilst we continue to strengthen our internal machinery, the nature of the tasks that await us is ever-changing and increasingly becoming more complex. As Andrew Young once said: "Once the Xerox copier was invented diplomacy died". In the intervening years we have had the emergence of the internet, facebook, twitter, 4-squared and a host of new social media. Where is the technology of tomorrow taking our world and what is the place of the new diplomat in this rapidly unfolding world? The diplomat of tomorrow faces a whole world of new challenges and a requires a new skills set.

At this point allow me to pause and acknowledge Deputy Minister Ebrahim Ismail Ebrahim who due to ill-health cannot be in our midst this morning. His wisdom, maturity and calm demeanour brings welcome relief in the rough and tumble of global politics that our role in international relations and cooperation demands. His leadership, experience and profound insight into the intricate dynamics of modern diplomacy has indeed been an anchor of strength. I'm sure that I speak on behalf of the collective in this House in wishing him a speedy recovery.

Cde Speaker and Honourable members; our practice of international relations, always emphasizes the fact that we need to be aware and alive to the various global drivers and trends that constitute the forces that significantly influence world affairs.

Cde Speaker, ladies and gentlemen; As a member of the international community, we remain committed to building a fair and equitable global economic and political architecture, which will benefit both the developing and developed countries, including the rich and poor of this global village.

We engage in this international discourse, informed by the various challenges of our time – from climate change to heightened demands for scarce resources; from political conflicts to economic deprivation; from food security to fuel insecurity; from poverty and underdevelopment to illiteracy and the poverty of the mind. As Honorable Members will agree, these are no small challenges; hence we come to this House to both report and seek further guidance.

As we celebrate our achievements, we remain mindful of the challenges facing the world, especially the recent developments in North Africa and the Middle East; the situation in Libya; the situation in Sudan's Abyei region; the

Middle East Peace Process; the struggles of the people of the Saharawi Republic; our relations with countries of Southeast Asia, i.e. Myanmar and Sri Lanka; including our relations with countries of Western Europe.

We further wish to use this opportunity to express our deep concern over the escalation of violence in Abyei, Sudan, which has resulted in the loss of lives.

We call for the immediate cessation of all hostilities; for cooperation with, and among, the competent Libyan authorities to facilitate the timely delivery of humanitarian assistance to the needy populations; the protection of foreign nationals, including the African migrants living in Libya; and the adoption and implementation of the political reforms necessary for the elimination of the causes of the current crisis.

In the Middle East, we have noted with appreciation the announcement by the Palestinian parties Fatah and Hamas on 27 April 2011 in Cairo that they have reached an understanding with the view to setting-up a transitional unity government and hold elections within eight months.

We further believe that the unity of the Palestinian people is vital for the creation of a free and democratic Palestinian State along the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its Capital. In this regard, we urge all Palestinian factions to unite behind a reformed Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) so as to carry forward the hopes and aspirations of all Palestinians for freedom, self-determination and human dignity.

Strengthening South-South Relations remains an important pillar of our foreign policy objectives, especially Asia where we have resident missions in the six South East Asian countries, namely Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam and the Philippines. These six countries as well as Myanmar (Burma) and Timor Leste also maintain resident missions in South Africa. Our Bilateral Trade relations has been steadily growing over the past 16 years with this region and the total trade between South Africa and South East Asia amounted to R52,3 billion in 2010, with Thailand as the biggest trading partner in the region.

In South Asia South Africa views Pakistan as an important role-player in the international arena and appreciates her as a bilateral partner. We however remain concerned about the domestic insurgency in Pakistan and call for parties to engage in meaningful dialogue to resolve their differences.

We note with great excitement the growing and excellent bilateral relations between South Africa and Sri Lanka. South Africa promotes the need for a peaceful and sustainable political solution, which will be best achieved through broad consultation and dialogue amongst all the peoples of Sri Lanka.

Cde Speaker and Honourable members; South Africa has noted with increasing concern recent political upheavals in certain countries within the Gulf region and denounces all forms of repression, intimidation and

aggression against civilians.

Since the mandate of 2011 as the year for a renewed focus on the creation of decent employment, the Gulf States continue to be an important partner to the attainment of this objective. Endowed with capital accumulation, South Africa has recorded success in attracting investment from the regions' investment arms – the Sovereign Wealth Funds - in the hospitality and real estate industries.

The creation of a joint US\$ 500 million infrastructure investment fund, co-established by the Industrial Development Corporation and the State General Reserve Fund of Oman, will further contribute to alleviating unemployment. Of further interest is the fact that the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority, the largest Sovereign Wealth Fund globally, has established the Africa Private Equity Division to investigate investment opportunities in Africa and that it has identified South Africa as a target market.

Finally, I would be failing in my duty if I do not acknowledge the historic and strategic relationship with Cuba, affirmed by the Presidential visit in December last year. It is also one that I have personally nurtured for over a decade. In the year that we celebrate 100 years of one of Africa's oldest, if not the oldest liberation movements, and 50 years of the historic battle of Cuito Cuanavale we must acknowledge the role that Cuba played in our freedom struggle; fighting side by side and sacrificing life and limb for our liberation. A relationship forged on the principles of freedom and justice can never be repaid in rands and cents.

Today, that revolutionary legacy lives on in the countless Cuban professionals especially in the healthcare and built-environment deployed throughout Africa, and even right here in Khayelitsha, Mitchells Plain and Delft not to mention their role in the success we achieved in developing world class infrastructure for World Cup 2010.

In July 2011 we will be engaging a further round of bilateral talks with this brave Island nation who has demonstrated resilience and tenacity in the face of imperialist aggression in the guise of an embargo for nearly half a century. We call for the immediate lift of the embargo and add our voices to the global call for the release of the Cuban 5.

In conclusion, as we strive for a world class practice of international relations and cooperation, and addressing the myriad of challenges facing our country, Africa and the world as a whole, we are reminded of the words of one of the founding fathers of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Kwame Nkrumah when he said: "Countrymen, the task ahead is great indeed, and heavy is the responsibility; and yet it is a noble and glorious challenge - a challenge which calls for the courage to dream, the courage to believe, the courage to dare, the courage to do, the courage to envision, the courage to fight, the courage to work, the courage to achieve - to achieve the highest excellencies and the fullest greatness of man. Dare we ask for more in life?"

I thank you!

Courtesy of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation, May 2011