



**Budget Vote Speech: Minister of
International Relations and Cooperation
Honorable Ms Maite Nkoana-
Mashabane, National Assembly,
Tuesday, 31 May 2011**

Chairperson;
Honourable Chair of the Portfolio Committee on International Relations and
Cooperation;
Honourable Members of the Portfolio Committee of International Relations
and Cooperation;
Your Excellencies Ambassadors,
High Commissioners and Representatives of International Organizations;
Distinguished guests;
Ladies and gentlemen;
Comrades and Friends;
Fellow South Africans,

Good morning and happy belated 'Africa Day'.

As we remember our own struggles for liberation and the creation of the OAU, we are reminded of the solidarity of our brothers and sisters, our friends and fellow citizens around the world who shared our dreams of a free and democratic Africa.

Let us take a moment to express our sincere and heartfelt condolences to those who lost family and friends through the floods, the earthquakes, the Tsunamis, the Volcanoes and other natural disasters in Australia, Brazil, Chile, Haiti, Japan, USA and other parts of the world.

We also remember the victims of violence in Africa, MENA region and in the various conflicts around the world, and recall the tragic bombings of the twin towers in New York in what will be its 10th Anniversary later this year.

We pledge our solidarity with these countries in their trying times, and convey our sincere and heartfelt condolences to families of the victims.

Let me thank President Zuma and Deputy President Motlanthe for leading our foreign policy efforts, for their tireless dedication, and for their wisdom and guidance.

Globalization has brought all domestic issues into a global frame, and I am therefore grateful for the support of Parliament, the NCOP, my Cabinet colleagues and our partner departments.

My sincere thanks to Deputy Minister Ebrahim Ebrahim, Deputy Minister Marius Fransman and to my Department. Your dedication, diligence and perseverance, often in the face of very difficult circumstances is appreciated.

Thank you!

I take this opportunity to congratulate Ambassador Jerry Matjila on his recent appointment as the Director General of our department. He brings a wonderful history of experience and involvement in international relations, and we look forward to working with him in service of our people.

Our comrade and mentor, Oliver Reginald Tambo reminded us of this purpose of serving our people when he spoke in Lusaka on 1 July 1989. He said: On 1 July 1989, our Honorable OR Tambo stated:

“...The fact that we are all here is an expression of the unity of purpose among concerned patriots. It is a portent of the unity of the South African people. It serves also as an example of how South Africans should meet ... as equals, as compatriots, engaged in a common endeavour to create a better future for us all.... It is indeed our collective responsibility to rid our country [and the world] of the cause of conflict, deprivation and disunity...”

OR Tambo, 1 July 1989, Lusaka

Although much has changed since 1989, the words of OR still echo and carry meaning for the work of our country and especially our Department of International Relations and Cooperation (the DIRCO), it is appropriate then that our head office in Pretoria carries his name. It is not only the name of OR Tambo that we have adopted - our foreign policy objectives are grounded in the philosophy of our glorious movement that brought democracy and justice to our shores.

It is our philosophy of togetherness, and the recognition of our interconnectedness, that frames our diplomacy – we are, as South Africans, because we are, as a society of nations.

Our task as a nation emerging from a troubled past has always been to create the political, economic and social spaces to address the challenges of poverty, underdevelopment and marginalization. That we are doing so, and doing so effectively, was the testimony of our people on 18 May 2011 as it had been since 27 April 1994....and hence, we as South Africans, can today stand united behind the dream of OR Tambo as “...a portent of unityas equals, as compatriots, engaged in a common endeavour to create a better future for us all...”.

This is our legacy. This is our heritage. This is our collective responsibility..... and our diplomacy

In a shifting geopolitical landscape constraint by budgets and time, our Department works tirelessly to be able to rise to the challenge presented before us to ensure we contribute to building a better Africa, fostering better strategic partnerships and significantly participating in global institutions of governance.

Honorable Chairperson,

I stand before you this morning humbled by the significant strides South Africa has made in the last two years. Nothing can explain the continued trajectory of our foreign policy better than inter alia:

- our election by acclamation to the world's pre-eminent peace and security organ, the United Nation's Security Council (UNSC);
- our admission to the most-powerful bloc of emerging markets, Brazil, Russia, India and China (BRIC);
- our leadership of the infrastructure development initiative within the framework of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD);
- our assumption of the chairpersonship of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Organ on Politics, Defence and Security;
- our hosting next month of the SADC-East African Economic Community (EAC)-Common Economic Community of East and Southern Africa (COMESA);
- our hosting of the COP17/CMP7 Summit in Durban later this year.
- Our hosting of the IBSA Summit later this year,

Our assumption of these major regional, continental and global responsibilities is a demonstration of the confidence that our continent and the international community at large have on our ability to selflessly fulfill these various roles and responsibilities.

The 2010 FIFA World Cup added to the growing list of our successes in hosting major events. Our people responded magnificently and today there is nothing but praise and admiration – and confidence that we are a reliable, responsible and valuable partner.

It is thus important to consolidate these gains and continue to utilize our experience to rise to the challenges brought about by the ever changing international environment.

Honorable Chairperson,

South Africa will continue to focus its foreign policy on promoting the integration of the SADC, the unity and the renewal of the African continent, South-South cooperation, North-South dialogue, and working with other countries for a global system of governance that is democratic and responsive to the interests and aspirations of developing countries.

Using bilateral and multilateral diplomacy, our programs on the continent and the world have been aligned to our national priorities.

In the area of peace and stability, we continue to support the SADC mediation efforts aimed at assisting Madagascar to return to constitutional normalcy through a more comprehensive and all-inclusive process that would guarantee lasting peace..

Following the historic referendum on the future of South Sudan in which Southern Sudanese unanimously voted for Statehood, South Africa will recognise the new Republic of South Sudan whose independence would be

declared on 09 July 2011. We must say, we express our deep concern with regard to the recent armed confrontation and violence in the Abyei region and we urge both the North and the South to cease any acts that will undermine the spirit of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), and instead resolve all outstanding issues, including Abyei, in a peaceful manner.

With regards to the DRC, we re-affirm our continued support to the Congolese government to build durable State Institutions that inspire confidence to the ordinary people. The second Presidential elections scheduled for November this year will be an important milestone and we will continue to support efforts aimed at the consolidation of democracy in that country

On Zimbabwe, we call on the parties to spare no effort in implementing the Global Political Agreement (GPA) in order to stabilise the political situation in Zimbabwe and encourage them to conclude discussions on the roadmap towards holding elections.

We observe that after a tenuous moment in the history of Cote d'Ivoire, the country is now poised for normalisation with the inauguration of President Alassane Ouattara. South Africa avails itself to work with the people and government of Cote d'Ivoire as they embark on a process towards national unity and reconciliation.

As I mentioned earlier, the situation in North Africa, and Libya in particular, continues to preoccupy the International community. Consistent with the decision taken by the AU on Libya, we reiterate our call for an immediate ceasefire that is verifiable and encourage the warring parties to begin dialogue leading to a democratic transition. South Africa firmly believes that the current crisis in Libya can only be resolved through an inclusive dialogue whose outcome would reflect the will of the people.

Honorable Chairperson,

We will continue to contribute towards the integration of our Region and also promote cooperation between Regional Economic Communities in order to realise the eventual integration of the African Continent.

In this regard, South Africa will host the Second Tripartite Summit of SADC, COMESA and EAC regions in the month of June 2011 which will commence negotiations for a Free Trade Area Agreement, covering over 700 Million people. *Honorable Chairperson,*

Next year we will be celebrating ten years of the African Union which was launched in Durban in 2002. Ten years on, we should assess the progress the AU has made since its establishment; and prioritise the establishment and strengthening of the AU organs to ensure that it effectively executes its mandate.

It is with this in mind that South Africa has been instrumental in supporting

the AU Audit report and the *2009-2012 Strategic Plan* of the Commission. The Audit report outlined measures that are needed to ensure that the AU is able to deliver on its mandate.

We will continue to utilize our concurrent membership of the UNSC, AU PSC and the SADC Organ on Peace and Security to work towards a peaceful and prosperous Africa in a just world.

South Africa has deposited its instrument of ratification of the *Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance* during the January 2011 AU Summit. We encourage Member States that have not yet ratified this important Charter to do so.

President Zuma leads the NEPAD High Level Sub-Committee on Infrastructure whose primary objective is to contribute towards intra-Africa trade through the construction of road and rail infrastructure in the North-South Corridor, which includes the SADC, EAC and COMESA regions.

Equatorial Guinea will be hosting the forthcoming Summit of the Africa Union, and we are doing our part to ensure that this becomes a success.

Honorable Chairperson,

Led by President Zuma, we joined the BRICS formation, just a few years after we co-founded IBSA, as another important formation to champion the cause of the marginalized, and to bring their voice into the political space that will craft our common future. We have maintained excellent bilateral relations with each of the BRICS countries and our membership binds us in a community of nations that are at the cusp of the wave of change. We must direct our energies to ensuring that this results in tangible outcomes that improve the lives of the people in South Africa, Africa and in the countries of our partners.

Honorable Chairperson,

The Caribbean and Latin America regions are important anchors of our South-South Cooperation. The Africa South America framework for partnership has given us a good model for South-South Cooperation.

We once again join those calling for the lifting of the US embargo against Cuba. We also welcome the outcome of the Presidential elections in Haiti and assure the incoming government of our support.

We have commenced with the implementation of the AU-endorsed roadmap towards the hosting of the African Diaspora Summit in 2012 here in our country, and, to that end, a preparatory ministerial meeting is scheduled for later in the year.

The UN General Assembly proclaimed 2011 the *International Year for People of African Descent*, and that at its 66th Session scheduled for September, it has scheduled a High Level Meeting to mark the 10th

Anniversary and renew political commitments for the implementation of the Durban Declaration and Plan of Action.

Honorable Members,

Asia and the Middle East continue to be areas of priority in our foreign policy in the context of South-South cooperation. We have very good and active bilateral relations with countries in this region.

We also take note of the report of the Panel of Experts appointed by the UN Secretary General on the conflict in Sri Lanka.

South Africa strongly urges all parties to work for a peaceful solution in the MENA region and ensure a sense of urgency.

However, we note with regret once more that no convincing progress has been made in the Arab-Israeli peace process since it was rekindled on 2 September 2010. We are however encouraged by the recent pact signed between the Palestinian Fatah government and Hamas. South Africa urges Israel to comply with already agreed upon commitments and obligations and for the creation of the state of Palestine based on the 1967 borders.

Honorable Members,

Strengthening of North-South Cooperation is another pillar of our foreign policy, and involves building strong bilateral relations with countries of North America and Europe, as well as Japan and Australasia in addressing challenges of poverty, under-development, lack of peace and security, and post-conflict reconstruction in Africa.

Our Strategic Dialogue with the United States is one mechanism that ensures sustained and ongoing dialogue between our two countries on issues of mutual interest.

We will continue utilizing our strategic dialogue with the European Union as well as individual countries of the EU, through high-level visits and bilateral mechanisms, to promote our national interest, including the African Agenda.

Honorable Chairperson,

South Africa has consistently re-affirmed the primacy of the multilateralism, in particular the UN System, as a guarantor for addressing our common challenges, in particular global peace and stability.

The importance of the UNSC cannot be understated and we call on all its members to respect the letter and spirit of Security Council resolutions. We reiterate that the reform of the UNSC is urgent and would go a long way in rectifying inequitable power relations within the Security Council.

Honorable Chairperson,

We have continued to work in all fora for the elimination of all weapons of

mass destruction and seek to ensure greater international peace and security through the promotion of disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and conventional arms control. With the entry into force of the Pelindaba Treaty in July 2010, which establishes a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Africa, South Africa will host the African Commission on Nuclear Energy (AFCONE) which, inter alia, will also maximise the utilization of expertise in Africa in the field of nuclear science and technology for the purpose of economic and social development on the continent. Furthermore, we note with appreciation the growing role of the G20 in the international system. We are thankful to it for the measures it took to arrest the further deterioration of the global economy. As Co-Chair of the Development Working Group of this body, we are better placed to work with others to strengthen the contribution of the G20 in the development arena.

Honorable Members,

South Africa will be hosting the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change COP17/CMP7 in Durban later this year.

We will have a dual role as the host; on the one hand as the President of the conference with the responsibility to lead member countries towards a fair, ambitious and balanced outcome; and on the other, as a country participating in the negotiations. Preparations for hosting this conference are now at an advanced stage both in terms of logistics and substance. We have and continue to participate in formal and informal consultations with different groups, regions and countries across the world towards Durban. As we speak, we are at the same time hosting the visiting UNFCCC Secretariat to further chart the way towards Durban.

The outcome of Durban ought to address, among others, resolving fundamental issues over the future of the Kyoto Protocol beyond 2012 and the operationalisation of the Cancun agreement

Our hosting of COP17/CMP7 dovetails with other international processes that we must keep within range as we move towards Durban, notably the Rio plus 20 (Rio+20) conference to be held in Brazil next year. The Rio+20 meeting will be building onto the outcome of the WSSD.

Honorable Members,

You will recall that in our 2010 Budget Vote, we made mention of efforts to create the South African Development Agency (SADPA), which intends to drive a development partnership programme in order to build innovative, proactive and sustainable partnerships to advance African development. DIRCO is currently finalizing a Bill, and we envisage that SADPA will be operational during the last quarter of 2011.

As mentioned during my previous Budget Vote Speech, DIRCO will be presenting a *Draft White Paper* outlining the principles and framework of our foreign policy – after an extensive consultative process that has seen the

Department interact with business, academia, labour and broader civil society.

Our Budget Vote draws its strength and inspiration from the prescripts of the national priorities of our government. To this end, President Zuma, in his state State of the Nation Address, challenged all of us to create more jobs and advance a sustainable development of our people.

As DIRCO we have responded to this call, by concentrating on the Youth of our country through skills development and empowerment. In this financial year, our Diplomatic Academy has taken an additional 39 Cadets that we are going to train for possible permanent absorption into the Department. In addition, we continue to fill our key Management and other vacant positions.

Through our Public Diplomacy, the DIRCO has increased its interaction with various sectors of our country, in an effort to ensure that ordinary South African's can and should be able to associate themselves with our foreign policy. We are also introducing proposals in conjunction with the DPSA aimed at enhancing the quality of life for officials and families abroad, including granting of unpaid leave to spouses employed in Government and exploring employment opportunities for spouses whilst stationed abroad. Furthermore, and in line with our spousal support programme, we are in the process of introducing special travelling privileges for officials whose spouses remain behind whilst they are serving our country abroad.

With regard to the corporate functioning of our department, we will continue to strengthen our corporate governance processes and compliance with the relevant regulatory frameworks, in ensuring that we continue to obtain unqualified audits.

DIRCO remains ceased with plans to ensure strengthened relations with the Portfolio Committee on International relations and Cooperation, the Select Committee on Trade and International Relations, as well as other committees on critical issues of importance and common interest. We remain hopeful that this financial year will see us maximizing our interaction, and to a greater extent, structure a number of interactive and consultative sessions with the committee. Today, we would like to assure the Committee of our full support of the work it does and that you can always count on us as a Department.

Honorable Members,

Today is the 31 May 2011. In 1910, exactly on the same day, was the formation of the Union of South Africa which was an outcome of a settlement between our colonizers on how best to oppress the black majority and perfect the colonial system. One product of this, two years later, was the birth of the ANC in 1912, whose Centenary will be celebrated next year on 08 January 2012.

These 100 years of struggle for freedom has bequeathed to us a rich tradition of solidarity and empathy – solidarity with the poor and those

struggling for the right to self-determination. The Freedom Charter enjoins us to live in Peace and Friendship with other nations.

As changes sweep across the globe and touch the lives of people in even the most remote of habitats, we cannot be mere spectators.

Our people, our history and our diplomacy demand more of us. We will continue to engage in the international community with a sense of purpose, to effect change rather than to just be affected by it.

In this time of rapid and constant change interdependence amongst nations is self-evident. It is also evident that mutually beneficial co-operation is a necessity.

Consequently, the world is experiencing the practical necessity of making the philosophical paradigm shift from '**power to partnership**' in international relations.

In short the world is experiencing and discovering 'Ubuntu' or as OR Tambo put it:

"....an expression of the unity of purpose among concerned compatriots.....as equals.....engaged in a common endeavour to create a better future for us all".

I thank you!

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