

# EXPERT PERCEPTIONS OF SOUTH AFRICA'S FOREIGN POLICY: VIEWS FROM PRETORIA AND ADDIS ABABA

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# OVERVIEW

- **Methodology & Rationale**
  - Rationale & Aims
  - Methodology
  - Questionnaire
- **Common themes emerging from the survey**
  - The African Agenda
  - Credibility
  - Report Card disaggregated by region
- **Key Priorities identified by the participants**
- **Key Partners**

# **1. METHODOLOGY & RATIONALE**

## **RATIONALE & AIMS**

- **Understand how key external stakeholders perceive South Africa's foreign policy;**
- **Gauge where South African policymakers are succeeding in their efforts; and**
- **Provide recommendations on how South Africa can strengthen intra-African cooperation.**

# METHODOLOGY

- **Qualitative Surveys: South Africa, Ethiopia**
- **Experts surveyed (60 interviews)**
  - Perceptions: opinions, not facts (but perceptions help shape reality)
- **Timeframe (December 2012-October 2013)**
  - Intervening variables
- **Weaknesses and Strengths**
  - **Strengths:** Depth, Nuance, Unsolicited/Unanticipated answers, flexibility to tailor the question to unanticipated topics, (single moderator)
  - **Weaknesses:** Difficult to draw comparisons, influences of perceptions vary – hard to extrapolate the findings to another sample.

# QUESTIONNAIRE



- **30 questions**
  - Included 4 closed questions – allowing for some quantitative and ranking
- **Flexibility of questionnaire**
- **Example of question:**
  - Which words or phrases come to mind when you think of South Africa's overall foreign policy?
  - Could you please comment on South Africa's "Africa policy"?
  - PROBE: What are the key differences when you think about SA's position in Africa and the country's position in the global community?

## **2. COMMON THEMES EMERGING FROM THE SURVEY ABOUT SOUTH AFRICA'S AFRICAN AGENDA**

# OVERALL PERCEPTIONS

**SA FOREIGN POLICY  
CLASSSED INTO THESE  
CATEGORIES:**

**LEADER**

**ACHIEVER**

**AFRICA-FOCUSSED**

**NEGOTIATOR**

**LONE WOLF**

**REACTIVE**

**IN ETHIOPIA A FEW  
ADDITONAL  
IMPRESSIONS EMERGED**

**A FACE IN THE CROWD**

**RIVAL**

**ENIGMA**

**FADING STAR**



# SA'S AFRICAN AGENDA

## - THE BOSS

- African Agenda is a key identity in South Africa's Foreign Policy. SA highly engaged in Africa. Linked to perceptions of it being a Leader, Achiever
- In Ethiopia: the "Benevolent Boss"
  - *Interestingly: "African Agenda" largely unknown in Ethiopia and confused with AU's Africa Agenda 2063*
  - *SA's commitment to the continent is seen as acknowledgement of Africa's contribution to the liberation struggle.*

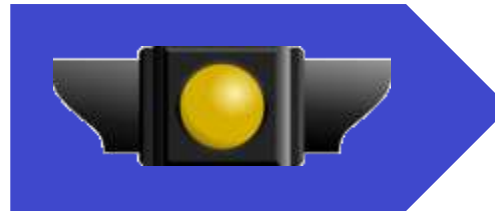
## - THE BIG BAD WOLF

- SA seeks leadership within Africa as a stepping stone for seeking a permanent seat on the UNSC

# SA'S PERCEIVED CREDIBILITY AS A REPRESENTATIVE FOR AFRICA – BY REGION FROM WITHIN AFRICA



**SADC**



**North Africa**



**East Africa**



**West Africa**

# SA'S PERCEIVED CREDIBILITY AS A REPRESENTATIVE FOR AFRICA VIEWS FROM ETHIOPIA



**African Union**



**REC's**



**United Nations**

# SA'S PERCEIVED CREDIBILITY AS A REPRESENTATIVE FOR AFRICA – BY REGION FROM THE REST OF THE WORLD



**Asia**



**North America**



**Central Africa**



**Europe**

# SA'S PERCEIVED CREDIBILITY AS A REPRESENTATIVE FOR AFRICA: VIEWS SOLICITED IN SOUTH AFRICA AND ETHIOPIA

## FOR

South Africa is the gateway to Africa and is in a position to play a prominent global role (e.g. membership of BRICS, G20 and recently of the UNSC)

**ETHIOPIA:** Being well-developed economically and socially means that it is in the lead to articulate a common economic perspective for Africa

South Africa is **demonstrably in favour of a stronger Africa** – and in a minority on instances is seen to have taken role of a generous helper on the continent

**ETHIOPIA:** Its negotiated settlement provides a blue print for conflict resolution on the continent

## AGAINST

**South Africa's domestic challenges:** poverty, instability, reports of corruption, unequal distribution of wealth, undermine its credibility

**ETHIOPIA:** There is a perception that South Africans don't see themselves as African.

South Africa is **not seen as collaborative enough**. They make assumptions about African regions that don't necessarily mirror the agenda of countries in that region. Linked to this is a perception that because SA is a strong economic power, that its own economic interests trump those of other states in Africa. **This view was shared by the majority in the Ethiopian leg.**

# SA'S PERCEIVED CREDIBILITY AS A REPRESENTATIVE FOR AFRICA: VIEWS SOLICITED IN SOUTH AFRICA AND ETHIOPIA

## FOR

South Africa **has gone out of its way to affiliate with certain organisations (BRICS, G20) on behalf of the continent** and this has contributed to its credibility on the global stage

Some see that **South Africa has avoided dominating others**, and balances its own and other countries' interests (European perspective)

**ETHIOPIA: At the 2012 BRICS summit South Africa involved RECs and AU leadership to present a unified voice (also a Southern African perspective)**

South Africa is **believed to have more traction with Sub-Saharan Africa** than Arab Africa

**ETHIOPIA: South Africa is seen as giving a voice to SADC within the AU**

## AGAINST

There is little evidence to support that South Africa is actually advancing Africa's issues within BRICS. **This view was also shared by the majority of respondents in Ethiopia.**

**ETHIOPIA: SA can do more to follow through on many of its decisions pertaining to Africa.**

**SA needs A closer relationship with nearest neighbours, especially SADC.**

Some of **SA's credibility rests on the promotion of its constitutional values** – if its behavior is at odds with these, credibility suffers

# REPORT CARD: SA FOREIGN POLICY



## SADC

Doing well	Needing improvement / challenges
<b>High visibility</b> – BRICS, AU, UN, G20; can't be ignored easily	Avoid potentially embarrassing mistakes by not adopting the right position
<b>Well respected</b> , promotes itself	<b>Lack of domestic consensus on SA's foreign policy</b>
Large number of missions – <b>reaching out intensively</b> throughout the world	<b>Engage other African countries more vigorously</b> – extend focus beyond SADC
<b>Strong focus on Africa</b> – concerned about the stability of the continent and its neighbours	<b>Reassure neighbours</b> that not Big Brother



# REPORT CARD: SA FOREIGN POLICY



## SADC Continued

Doing well	Needing improvement / challenges
Good work in Sudan, DRC, Zimbabwe	Could be more prominent in conflict resolutions in Africa
Economy: opening up to countries; promoting and encouraging SA businesses to invest in other countries	Ensure that <b>external investment in SA translates to opportunities</b> /empowerment for immediate neighbours
Articulating issues and <b>not being shy to take ownership</b> of its foreign policy	
Presidency and DTI well informed on international issues – Head of State always travel with business delegations	



# REPORT CARD: SA FOREIGN POLICY



## East Africa

Doing well	Needing improvement / challenges
Highlighting the <b>African Agenda</b>	<b>South Africa's domestic challenges:</b> poverty, instability, reports of corruption, unequal distribution of wealth, that it needs to focus on
<b>Highlighting the development and economic growth agenda within Africa</b>	Adopt a <b>more collaborative approach</b> , not always playing on South Africa's terms or in South Africa's backyard

# REPORT CARD: SA FOREIGN POLICY



## East Africa Continued

Doing well	Needing improvement / challenges
Genuinely working for peace	SA can be <b>reactive</b> when proclaiming a stance on some issues.
Deals with countries in a way that <b>persuades them to cooperate</b>	Take advantage of <b>research institutions</b> so <b>African issues</b> can be packaged in a democratic way
Holds many meetings and <b>participates in many international forums</b>	

# REPORT CARD: SA FOREIGN POLICY



**West Africa**



**Central Africa**



**North Africa**

Doing well	Needing improvement / challenges
<b>Flexible framework</b> to take political decisions	<b>Try to make economy more inclusive</b>
<b>Staunch supporter of South-South cooperation</b> and issues	Remember that <b>it is not the only player in Africa</b>
Foreign policy needs to be consistent to create a sense of predictability	<b>Recognise and learn from setbacks</b> – Cote d'Ivoire, Central African Republic and Libya
	<b>Co-ordinate fully with national authorities and regional economic communities</b>

# REPORT CARD: SA FOREIGN POLICY



*“Sometimes they send different signals and sometimes confusing signals. Maybe it is because they try to embrace so many things at the same time”*

# REPORT CARD: SA FOREIGN POLICY



## Europe

Doing well	Needing improvement / challenges
Membership of BRICS, G20, UN Security Council – <b>global influence; second UNSC term</b> so soon after first	<b>Difficulty in marrying an anti-imperialist stance with human rights stance</b> / More emphasis on peace, security and human rights stance
<b>Election of Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma</b> to chair AU Commission	Not seen as consistent, too many clashing interests. <b>Over-reliance on negotiation, reluctance to intervene</b>
<b>Do well in supporting African Agenda</b>	<b>Undermined by internal political problems</b>
<b>Poverty alleviation, social areas</b>	<b>Not knowing and articulating Africa's positions</b> thoroughly

# REPORT CARD: SA FOREIGN POLICY



## Asia

Doing well	Needing improvement / challenges
<b>Bringing Africa's voice to the world scene</b>	<b>Needs to use election of Dr Dlamini-Zuma wisely, not obviously promoting SA interests</b>
<b>Raising points of view or issues even if not going to be the majority opinion or contrary to major power's opinion</b>	<b>Need a constructive dialogue on South African internal policies that affect foreign investment and infrastructure</b>
<b>Promoting African integration, seeking strength through unity</b>	<b>Needs to take into consideration the different interests of African countries</b>

# REPORT CARD: SA FOREIGN POLICY



## North America

### Doing well

In things like **NEPAD** and **AU** using multi-lateral functions to promote the values that are in the South African constitution

Advancing political roadmap in **Madagascar**

**Important role in COP 17**

In the **G20**, promoting international economic stability, SA has been a very strong team player

### Needing improvement / challenges

**Not resourced adequately** for logistics required in **peacekeeping** efforts

**Lack of understanding of issues in Middle East and Libya** – resulted in positions that were problematic

# REPORT CARD: SA FOREIGN POLICY VIEWS GARNERED IN ETHIOPIA

Doing well	Needing improvement / challenges
Major players on international governance (BRICS, G20)	<b>SA's domestic challenges need to be addressed:</b> Also xenophobic violence and attitudes in South Africa undermine official positions towards the rest of the continent
Very good in the South – integration, economic policy, <b>South-South co-operation</b>	<b>Very strong in the sub-region</b> but not as visible outside
	South Africa has to be <b>careful not to see itself as independent of the rest of the continent</b>
Large role in the transition from the OAU to the AU	<b>South Africa is seen as overambitious and acquisitive;</b> needs to work more to be seen to be consultative



# REPORT CARD: SA FOREIGN POLICY VIEWS GARNERED IN ETHIOPIA

Doing well	Needing improvement / challenges
Dialogues in DRC ; Burundi	Seen as <b>arrogant</b>
Development of NEPAD	
Building partnerships outside of Africa (BRICS)	<b>Greater need for tactical communication</b> – South Africa's intentions are prone to be misinterpreted particularly when it acts independently outside of continental consensus
<b>Performed well in trade and investment</b> – South African investments are pervasive in Africa and <b>contribute to empowerment</b>	<b>Needs to concentrate more on developing partners within Africa</b>

## **4. PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED FOR SOUTH AFRICA BY THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE SURVEY**

# WHERE SHOULD SOUTH AFRICA BE FOCUSING ITS ATTENTION?

## Views: Ethiopia

- 1 Working with the AU
- 2 Reducing poverty in SA and Africa
- 3 Building & sustaining relationships with neighbours
- 4 Working with the UN
- 5 Supporting South-South co-operation



## Views: South Africa

- Working with the AU
- Promoting SA business and trade overseas
- Building & sustaining relationships with neighbours
- Reducing poverty in SA and Africa
- Supporting South-South co-operation



# INTERESTING NUANCES EMERGED WHEN EXAMINING PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED FROM REST OF AFRICA, EUROPE, NORTH AMERICA, ASIA



1

Working with the AU

Promoting SA business and trade overseas

Promoting SA business and trade overseas

Continued supply of vital resources

2

Reducing poverty in SA and Africa

Reducing poverty in SA and Africa

Reducing poverty in SA and Africa

Relationships with neighbours

3

Promoting SA business and trade overseas

Working with the North on common objectives

Combating diseases

Working with the UN

4

Supporting South-South co-operation

Working with the AU

Working with the North on common objectives

Reducing poverty in SA and Africa

5

Relationships with neighbours

Acting as a bridge between North & South

Relationships with neighbours

Working with the AU

6

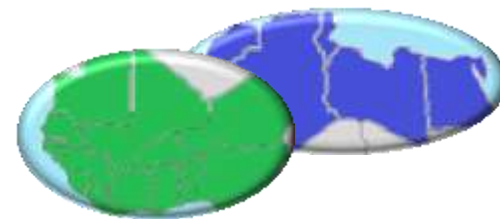
Combating diseases

Relationships with neighbours

Protecting SA nationals overseas

Promoting SA business and trade overseas

# Priorities Continued: SADC, East Africa, Central Africa, West and Northern Africa



1

Working with the AU

Working with the AU

Working with the AU

Ensuring the continued supply of vital resources

2

Promoting SA business and trade overseas

Promoting SA business and trade overseas

Working with the UN

Working with the AU

3

Supporting South-South co-operation

Ensuring the continued supply of vital resources

Tackling climate change

Working with the UN

4

Advancing Africa's concerns

Relationships with neighbours

Advancing Africa's concerns

Working with NEPAD

5

Relationships with neighbours

Reducing poverty

Combating diseases

Supporting South-South co-operation

6

Reducing poverty

Combating diseases

Working with the North on common objectives

Tackling climate change

# Priorities Continued: AU, RECs AND IGOs



1

Relationships with  
neighbours

Working with the AU

Working with the AU

2

Combating diseases

Reducing poverty in  
SA and Africa

Working with the UN

3

Working with the AU

Counter-terrorism

Supporting South-  
South co-operation

4

Supporting South-  
South co-operation

Promoting  
SA business and  
trade abroad

Relationships with  
neighbours

5

Reducing poverty in  
SA and Africa

Relationships with  
neighbours

Reducing poverty in  
SA and Africa

6

Counter-terrorism

Working with the UN

Advancing Africa's  
concerns

## **5. KEY AFRICAN PARTNERS IDENTIFIED BY THE PARTICIPANTS**

# KEY PARTNERS IN THE REST OF AFRICA



Angola received more spontaneous mentions than any other country within SADC; the DRC was mentioned as a strategic partner for SA and as a country in need of assistance



## PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

- Continental leader - capacity to elevate African concerns to global platforms is acknowledged BUT there are important caveats...
- Bridge Building Role - External actors, with the exception Europe – Ethiopian findings no South African exceptionalism
- Role of South African business is particularly interesting – Savoir-faire BUT....

## PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

- Successful in communicating the centrality of the African Agenda in – Wide acknowledgement, CAVEATS remain
- AU ought to be central – but the SADC neighborhood ought to be the first point of call

QUO VADIS?

**THANK YOU**

