

**Speech delivered by Deputy Minister of International Relations and
Cooperation, Mr Alvin Botes on Tuesday, 14 February 2023 during the Debate
of the State of the Nation Address 2023**

**Madam Speaker
President Ramaphosa
Deputy President Mabuza
Cabinet Members
Members of Parliament**

South Africa's Foreign Policy, pivoted on the four concentric circles of Pan Africanism, Global South Solidarity, Cooperation with the Industrialised North and the Deepening of Multilateralism, through Global Governance.

We execute our vision to Build a Better Africa and a World, being cognisance that we find ourselves within a global VUCA World, characterized by increased Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity and Ambiguity. Our National Interest Document is a key interlocutor in developing strategies that will effectively counter - balance Volatility with Vision, Uncertainty with Understanding, Complexity with Clarity and Ambiguity with Agility.

South Africa's national interest framework document therefore recognized the need to recalibrate South Africa's foreign policy in the light of domestic policy changes, and that we are all responsible for the domestication of South Africa's foreign policy, state and non-state actors.

Speaker

Ubuntu Diplomacy

The world abroad and the world at home are not two solitudes. They are interconnected and interdependent. The plight of the oppressed and vulnerable in the world, demands proximity of South Africa's Ubuntu Diplomacy, foreground on solidarity.

South Africa opposes the US designation of Cuba as a State Sponsor of Terrorism, together with a repudiation of the enforcement of Title III of the U.S. Helms-Burton Act. These punitive measures reinforce the US blockade which causes great economic hardship, especially for the poor and vulnerable citizens of Cuba. Mr. President, thank you for endorsing our vote in favour of the annual resolution at UNGA on the necessity of lifting the US-imposed economic, commercial and financial blockade against Cuba.

The Palestine people has been beleaguered, has been besieged and has been betrayed by the inaction of the international community. Former President of Mozambique, Samora Machel reminded us that 'international solidarity is not an act of charity, but an act of unity between allies fighting on different terrains toward the

same objectives.’ The two-state solution, in accordance the Oslo Peace Accords must be implemented by the State of Israel.

Mr. President, you hosted the President of The Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic and Secretary General of the Polisario Front, President Ghali. We must confirm the 1975 International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruling that Morocco has absolutely no right to occupy territory in Western Sahara and call on the AU to engage with the 1983 Peace Plan, adopted by the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), which provides for self-determination of the people of Western Sahara.

South African strengthens the message of solidarity for the loss of life in Türkiye and the Syrian Arab Republic, during the earthquake. We further applaud the South African Police Service’ Search and Rescue mobilisation and non-state actors, such as Gift of the Givers, engaging in Humanitarian Diplomacy.

Peace Diplomacy: African Continent

For South Africa, the negotiation and entry into force of the ***Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW)***, as well as the ***Pelindaba Treaty***, is a true reflection of what African States have achieved in pursuance of our common security objectives.

Mr. President, you currently hold the Presidency of the ***AU’s Peace and Security Council (PSC)*** for the month of February and we request you to continue to mobilise financial resources for ongoing ***peace-making, peacebuilding and peace-support missions***.

Lesotho

We recognized the sterling leadership provided in Lesotho by President Ramaphosa, as SADC appointed special envoy to Lesotho. South Africa further welcomes the commitment made by the Right Honourable Matekane, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Lesotho to prioritise the implementation of the comprehensive national reforms process.

Eswatini

We underpin the Extra-Ordinary SADC Troika Summit position urging the Government of the Kingdom of Eswatini to urgently initiate the process of the National Dialogue, which we submit must be an Inclusive Dialogue. We note SADC’s condemnation of the killing of Mr. Thulani Maseko, a leading human rights lawyer and political activist in the Kingdom of Eswatini, and its encouragement that the Government of the Kingdom of Eswatini should conduct a comprehensive investigation into his killing.

Mozambique

Mr. President, under your leadership, South Africa chaired the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation and provided support to Mozambique through the SADC Mission on Mozambique (SAMIM), and we are a troop contributing country. Since the deployment of SAMIM, there has been tremendous improvement in the humanitarian and security situation, resulting in the return of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) to their areas of origin. South Africa further joined the Extra-Ordinary SADC Troika Summit solidarity in honour of SAMIM personnel who lost their lives in the line of duty in Mozambique.

DRC

South Africa are deeply concern about the unstable security situation in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). We particularly wish to recognise the valiant effort of South African peacekeepers serving in the UN's MONUSCO mission and extend our personal condolence on the passing of Sergeant Vusi Mabena, flight engineer killed in action.

Sergeant Vusi Mabena, your blood will nourish the tree that will bear the fruits of peace in the Democratic Republic of Congo. We will tell the people that you love them and that they must continue the fight to bring about peace and security in Africa.

Ethiopia

We congratulate the AU High Level Panel amongst others which have Dr Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, former Deputy President of the Republic of South Africa as a member. It has brought about the Agreement for Lasting Peace through a Permanent Cessation of Hostilities between the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) on 2 November 2022, in Pretoria, South Africa.

Humanitarian Diplomacy

South Africa executes its Humanitarian Diplomacy through the African Renaissance Fund (ARF) to the Continent and further afield. During the Covid-19 pandemic, we partnered with the UN World Food programme to establish a temporary assistance hub at ORTIA. Some of South Africa's largest humanitarian projects are in South Sudan and Mozambique.

Economic Diplomacy

African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA)

The AfCFTA is one of the flagship projects of Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, enjoined by its seven aspirations to realise an inclusive prosperity. A South African, Wamkele Mene is the Secretary General and the penholder on implementation of the

prescripts of the Abuja Treaty and Lagos Plan of Action. The Promotion of economic diplomacy has dialectically contributed to your investment target of R1.2 trillion-rand, Mr. President.

South Africa's diplomatic missions across the globe stand ready to mobilise R2-trillion by 2028, with a particular focus to increase our intra-Africa trade, which stands at 17% of total trade.

Mr. President because of your leadership, we exported in 2021, more to Africa (R385 b) than to the EU (R355 b).

The AfCFTA would cover a market of 1.2 billion Africans with a combined GDP of US\$2.5 trillion; would increase intra-African trade by up to 52.3% and expand the size of Africa's economy to US\$29 trillion by 2050, as estimated by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa.

Global Governance

As the only African country in the G20 and BRICS, as well as being one of the top 10 strategic partners of the EU, South Africa continues to place the African continent and the Global South on the agenda in these fora. A critical priority for 2023 is South Africa's Chairship of BRICS under the theme: "**BRICS and Africa: Partnership for Mutually Accelerated Growth, Sustainable Development, and Inclusive Multilateralism.**"

Mr. President, the Global South is elated with the re-election of ***Brazilian President Lula da Silva***, and we welcome his support for your leadership in BRICS.

One of the issues which will be discussed in BRICS is how to restructure the global, political, economic and financial architecture so that it becomes more balanced, representative, inclusive, and equitable.

Mr. President, under your leadership, the international community voted overwhelmingly for South Africa to be a member of the **UNHRC** for the next three years (2023-2025).

We congratulate ***Advocate Mojankunyane Gumbi for being appointed the UN's Special Adviser for Addressing Racism in the Workplace.***

Ukraine-Russia Conflict

South AFRICA continues to advocate respect for international law and adherence to the UN Charter, as well as peaceful end to conflicts. The reform of the UN and the UN Security Council is urgent and necessary, the latter in accordance the Ezulweni Consensus, which depicts the position of the Common African Group.

Mr. President, SADC's Extra-Ordinary Troika Summit adopted the draft African Union Declaration on the USA proposed '***Countering Malign Russian Activities in Africa Act***' and to reaffirm the stance of Non-Alignment on conflicts outside the continent and the region.

Africa Bilateral Work

Multilateralism

Eight South Africa - European Union Summit, which South Africa will host in the first half of 2023. I wish to reiterate the South African Government's appreciation for the continued EU support to development cooperation and EU's support during the pandemic and to ***Biovac and the mRNA vaccine technology transfer hub*** in South Africa.

We further appreciate the technical assistance received from the EU related to the possible ***grey-listing of South Africa by the Financial Action Task Force***.

Speaker

"Each day carries both the burden of its past and the seeds of its future". (OR Tambo 1987)

I thank you