



**Joint Communiqué of the Fifteenth Session of the
Joint Commission of Cooperation between the
Republic of South Africa and the Islamic Republic
of Iran held in Pretoria on 10 August 2023**

1. At the invitation of Her Excellency, Dr Naledi Pandor, the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of the Republic of South Africa, His Excellency, Dr Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran paid an official visit to the Republic of South Africa on 10 August 2023 to co-chair the Fifteenth Session of the Joint Commission of Cooperation.
2. During the visit, Dr Amir-Abdollahian paid a courtesy call on His Excellency, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa, the President of the Republic of South Africa.
3. Members of the South African delegation engaged their Iranian counterparts within the respective technical working groups, on 7 and 8 August 2023.
4. Both Ministers expressed their satisfaction at the developing and enhanced relationship that exists between South Africa and Iran, as well as the efforts made since the Fourteenth Joint Commission of Cooperation, held in Tehran, on 16 October 2019.
5. The Ministers reviewed the decisions of the Fourteenth Meeting of the Joint Commission and expressed their satisfaction at the progress achieved despite the constraints of COVID-19 that plagued the globe in the interim period.
6. Both Ministers welcomed the work of the Deputy Ministerial Working Group (DMWG), an effective mechanism that contributes to the relations and interaction that exist between South Africa and Iran. The Tenth Deputy Ministerial Working Group was held in Tehran, in May 2022. The next Deputy Ministerial Working Group will take place in Pretoria at a mutually agreed time.

7. POLITICAL CLUSTER

- 7.1 The Ministers exchanged views on the status of the bilateral relationship, as well as on regional and international issues.
- 7.2 The Ministers also discussed the importance of continued high-level visits, in particular the envisaged State Visit of His Excellency, President Raisi to South Africa.
- 7.3 The Iranian Foreign Minister expressed his thanks and appreciation to the Republic of South Africa for the invitation extended to the BRICS-Africa Outreach and the BRICS Plus Dialogues during the 15th BRICS Summit.
- 7.4 The Ministers reviewed the work of the Senior Officials' Meetings and the outcomes of the technical working groups and discussed views on enhancing sectoral cooperation.
- 7.5 The Ministers also exchanged views on the following issues:

7.5.1 Impact of the rapprochement in the MENA region

The two sides welcomed the resumption of diplomatic relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The Ministers welcomed the return of Syria to the Arab League as a positive development in contributing towards peace in the region.

Furthermore, the Ministers agreed to consult further in an attempt to find a lasting solution to the conflict in Yemen. Both sides appreciated the peaceful steps of the regional stakeholders in contributing to the peace efforts in Yemen.

Essentially, both sides agreed that a peacefully negotiated settlement in Yemen can only be achieved by a Yemeni solution to the Yemeni problem driven by the Yemeni people. Both sides further reiterated the importance of lifting the blockade to deliver humanitarian aid to the Yemeni people.

Both sides share a common understanding on what is important and what needs to be done to help improve the oceans economy in the interest of both countries' GDPs.

Accordingly, South Africa and Iran recognise the importance of the Indian Ocean region.

7.5.2 Palestine

Both, South Africa and Iran condemned the continued illegal expansion of settlement activity in the West Bank and, in particular, in East Jerusalem. Equally concerning to both sides is the extra judicial killing of Palestinians both in Gaza and the West Bank.

They also called on the international community to further strengthen their support for the legal and legitimate demands of the Palestinian people against the apartheid regime of Israel toward the establishment of a sovereign, independent and viable Palestinian state, including the status of Jerusalem (Al-Quds) as the capital of a sovereign and independent Palestine.

The humanitarian crisis unfolding in Gaza behoves the international community to lift the siege in the Gaza Strip in order for the Palestinians to have free movement and access to the world at large.

7.5.3 Africa

The South African side provided a detailed overview of recent developments in Africa on peace and security Initiatives on the African Continent. It further provided a briefing on developments related to the African Union's Agenda 2063, including the establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA), which is anchored on the economic integration of the Continent, aimed at boosting intra-Africa trade and Continental development.

South Africa shared its views on the developmental issues in the Continent and in particular in advancing the priorities of Agenda 2063 and AfCFTA as a means of contributing to Regional and Continental economic integration.

The Islamic Republic of Iran welcomed the positive role that the Republic of South Africa is playing within SADC and the Continent and stands ready to partner South Africa in its continental agenda.

7.5.4 Implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan Of Action (JCPOA)

Both the Republic of South Africa and the Islamic Republic of Iran regret the withdrawal of the United States from the JCPOA and called on all parties to resume the negotiations based on Vienna conclusions with the aim of full and effective implementation of the JCPOA.

All Member States of the UN are obliged to support the implementation of the JCPOA as reflected by UNSC Resolution 2231. Accordingly, the lifting of sanctions on the Islamic Republic of Iran is necessary for the normalisation of economic and trade relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran by Member States.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, while expressing its gratitude to the constructive position of South Africa, calls on all parties to return to the commitments of the JCPOA.

7.5.5 Multilateral

Both parties emphasised their determination to promote cooperation and constructive interaction in the multilateral arena and in particular the United Nations, in order to safeguard and strengthen multilateralism. The sides reiterated their rejection of unilateralism and efforts to undermine multilateralism.

Both sides underscored the centrality of the United Nations, its Principles and Charter as key to promoting peace, security and development. They emphasised the importance of a comprehensive reform of multilateral structures, especially the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to ensure fair and equitable representation, including addressing the historical injustice against the Global South.

7.5.6 Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)

While calling upon the valuable principles and goals of the NAM, both countries reaffirmed the necessity of the active interaction among members of the NAM, in order to promote the role and activities of the movement for the settlement of regional and multilateral challenges.

7.5.7 Countering terrorism and violent extremism

While noting the increasing threat of terrorism and extremism in the international arena, both countries called for active participation of all members of the international community to combat this scourge. Countering terrorism and extremism requires a comprehensive approach in order to address its root causes. Furthermore, both parties reaffirmed the central role of the United Nations in combating terrorism and extremism and emphasised the importance of strengthening effective initiatives. Both sides agreed to share experiences and cooperate in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism.

Both parties reiterated the necessity of respecting religions and Holy Books and strongly condemned any desecration in this regard.

7.5.8 Human Rights

Both sides welcomed the first Session of the Human Rights Dialogue that took place in Pretoria in August 2018 and the second Session was held in Tehran in September 2022.

Both sides agreed on strengthening their bilateral and multilateral consultations on Human Rights in international fora, in particular at the United Nations in New York and Geneva.

Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to human rights and the Human Rights Council and expressed concern at the instrumentalization and double standards when dealing with human rights and combating terrorism.

7.5.9 Defence

Both sides agreed on the official visit of the South African Minister of Defence and Military Veterans to Iran later in the year. The Iranian side will extend an invitation to the South African side for this visit. The dates will be communicated through the diplomatic channel.

Both sides also agreed that the next Joint Defence Committee will take place in Tehran in October 2023. The dates and agenda items will be exchanged through the diplomatic channel.

8. ECONOMIC CLUSTER

8.1 Trade and Investment

In order to facilitate trade, investment and economic cooperation both parties agreed to facilitate the signing of government-to-government MOUs as follows:

- Joint Economic Roadmap (2023 – 2028) which suggests three working groups namely Trade and investment, Mining and Technical and Engineering Services.
- Trade Facilitation, regarding issues of standards, technical regulations, metrology accreditation and conformity assessment procedures.
- Export Credit guarantee and export credit Insurance between ECIC & EGFI

8.2 Private Sector

Chambers cooperation regarding business-to-business engagements both sides agreed to facilitate the signing of Chamber-to-Chamber MOU between the SACCI & ICCIMA.

8.3 Cooperatives

Both parties acknowledged that the previously negotiated text is still valid. The South African side is expecting the finalization of the policy amendment to the Cooperatives Policy. Once this is finalized, the MoU will be ready for signature.

The Ministry of Small Business proposed the Iranian side to consider an MoU on SMMEs and the Iranian side has agreed to consult and revert.

Both parties agreed to sign the proposed MoU after the policy amendments on Cooperatives are completed. Both parties agree to sign the agreement in the near future.

8.4 Environment

Both parties undertook to enhance bilateral cooperation in the areas of the environment and sustainable development, within the context of the exchanged, negotiated and agreed upon draft of MoU in the field of the Environment.

The areas of cooperation will include inter alia environmental education; air pollution monitoring and control; climate change; conservation and sustainable use of natural resources such as biological diversity, combatting pollution; management of the coastal environment and waste management.

The two countries undertook to have the MoU ready for signing at the upcoming State Visit in Pretoria, 31 October 2023.

8.5 Agriculture

Both parties endorsed cooperation Agreements in the following fields:

- Plant Protection and Quarantine
- Veterinary Animal Health and Food Safety

Both parties agreed to a Programme of Agricultural Cooperation as an outcome of the signed Memorandum of Understanding on Agricultural Cooperation signed on 24 April 2016.

Both parties will endeavour to have the above-mentioned Agreements and Programme of Agricultural Cooperation signed.

8.6 Transport

8.6.1 Maritime

Both Parties have agreed to finalise MoU on Mutual Recognition of Certificates of competency of seafarers (1/10 STCW), to be concluded by 31 October 2023. The conclusion of this agreement will facilitate access to job opportunities and other economic benefits. Text will be shared via diplomatic channels.

8.6.2 Rail

Both Parties expressed their willingness to cooperate in the fields of infrastructure, design, construction and development such as megastructures, repair and maintenance of freight and passenger cars, electrical devices and capacity building in the technical and engineering fields.

8.6.3 Civil Aviation

Both Parties agreed to strengthen cooperation in the field of aviation training and skills development.

8.6.4 Transport Related Matters

Both parties have finalized the overarching MOU on transport related matters and will be signed during the upcoming state visit.

8.6.5 Port Collaboration

South Africa and Iran expressed willingness to strengthen their cooperation in maritime transport, ports management and logistics, transfer of technology, and digital solution.

8.7 Science and Innovation

The parties agreed on new areas of the partnership that include stem cell research, inter-academy cooperation, nanotechnology, space science and renewable energy.

Both parties expressed their readiness to publish calls for research proposals in 2024 to focus on stem cells, nanotechnology, space sciences and Renewable energy and human and social sciences.

Both parties expressed their determination to sign an MoU in technology innovation to expand joint scientific and technological cooperation.

Both parties expressed their readiness to initiate cooperation between the center for international scientific studies and collaborations (CISSC), Islamic Republic of Iran and the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), republic of South Africa.

The Iranian side expressed the intention to establish a Centre of Innovation and Technology in Tshwane/Pretoria. Both parties expressed interest to establish this center as soon as possible and the initiation process will be communicated through the appropriate diplomatic channels. The establishment of this Centre will be the responsibility of the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology (MSRT).

8.8 Water Cooperation

The memorandum of understanding signed on April 24, 2016 between two Parties in the field of water resources management which is still valid based on the provisions of this agreement, is the basis for future cooperation in this regard. The parties agreed to further exchange the technical expertise aligned to the current Action Plan comprising of the following aspects:

- desalination
- water and wastewater treatment and water quality
- water diplomacy and governance of transboundary basins
- groundwater management and exploitation
- water infrastructure management and development;

The parties agreed to exchange to each other requirements and action plan within one month for implementing this MOU.

Both parties also agreed to reinstate the deferred Joint Water Committee technical visit to Tehran, Ministry of Energy to expose the South African technical managers to their ground projects, and governance within two months.

8.9 Energy

In order to resume and expand mutual cooperation between the Republic of South Africa and the Islamic Republic of Iran in the field of oil, gas, refinery and petrochemical sector, the Iranian party proposed its draft of the MoU between the Ministry of Petroleum of Iran and the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy of South Africa. The parties decided to finalise the abovementioned MoU within one month so that this MoU will be signed by the Ministers of the two countries during the visit of the Honourable President of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the Republic of South Africa. Both sides extensively deliberated on exploring to agree in the following areas:

- oil, gas and petroleum
- electricity

9. SOCIAL CLUSTER

9.1 Higher Education and Training

The South African side has extended an invitation to the Iranian Ministry officials for a study visit to South Africa during the state visit.

The South African side undertook to submit draft MoU in the field of Post School Education and Training (Higher Education, Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVETs) and Community Education and Training (CETs) in the near future.

The South African side expressed an interest in scholarships to focus on Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) as well as capacity building programmes in a wide range of study areas for Universities, TVET and CET and Training staff, institutions and mobility programmes for students.

Both parties agreed to explore scholarship opportunities and mobility programmes. In addition to this, Iran offered fully funded Persian and Literature scholarships.

Both sides noted and encouraged ongoing institutional partnerships and linkages through exchange programmes (short-term exchange of students and staff, joint academic and research programmes, and joint degrees).

9.2 Labour

The South African side submitted the draft MoU on employment and labour for consideration by the Iranian counterpart. The Parties agreed to separate Labour from Social development matters on the MoU. The MoU could be ready subject to legal processes. The Parties agreed to share the text through diplomatic channels for concurrence before going through legal processes by August 2025.

9.3 Social Development

The Parties shared a draft MoU in the field of social welfare, community development and social security system, insurance, and pension to advance mutual interest. The text will be further shared through diplomatic channels for concurrence by the Iranians by August 2023. The MoU could be ready for signing in the upcoming state visit subject to legal processes.

9.4 Health

The Ministry of Health and Medical Education of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the National Department of Health of the Republic of South Africa, while welcoming the development of health cooperation between the two countries, emphasized following areas:

- Both parties emphasized the exchange of high-level and expert delegations to visit their capabilities in the fields of prevention and control of communicable and non-communicable diseases.
- Both parties further emphasized the exchange of experiences, the implementation of joint research projects and the holding of training courses in the field of diseases diagnosis and treatment.
- Both parties emphasized the exchange of information and experts in the field of pharmaceutical industry and supplies, especially for laboratory activities and control of health products.
- Both parties further emphasized the exchange of lessons and experiences in the area of primary healthcare reforms, setting up electronic health records and integrated disease surveillance and response system.
- Both parties announced their readiness to facilitate the registration of medicines, vaccines and medical equipment, in accordance with the domestic laws and the national regulations of the two countries.
- Both parties encourage joint investment of private sectors in the two countries in various areas of health, such as providing specialized health care services, exporting and setting up a joint production line of medicines and medical equipment.

To this end, both parties further agreed to establish a Joint Working Group and setting up the bi-annual operational program by the end of September 2023.

9.5 Sports, Arts and Culture

Both parties have reiterated their willingness to promote mutually beneficial cooperation in the fields of arts, culture and heritage with the purpose of encouraging and celebrating diverse cultures of our respective Countries.

To this end, both parties have drafted and finalised text of the new Programme of Cooperation (POC) that will activate the implementation of mutually beneficial cultural exchange programme between the two countries.

9.6 Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities

The Parties discussed the three MOUs (1) Bilateral Cooperation in the Field of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (2) Bilateral Cooperation in the Field of Empowerment of Women; and (3) Bilateral Cooperation in the Field of Youth Development.

Both Parties agreed to take the mainstreaming approach so that all MOUs contain areas of cooperation relevant to women, youth and persons with disabilities. Both Parties further agreed that the MOUs should be finalized and be ready for signing in the upcoming State Visit.

10. Appreciation

It was agreed that the Sixteenth Meeting of the Joint Commission of Cooperation will be held in Tehran, the exact date of which would be mutually agreed upon through diplomatic channels.

The Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs acknowledged that this Fifteenth Meeting took place during the month of August, which is dedicated to women in South Africa. He further appreciated the heroic role of women in the liberation struggle in South Africa.

The Islamic Republic of Iran expressed its sincere appreciation to the Republic of South Africa for the warm hospitality and the excellent arrangements in hosting the Fifteenth Joint Commission of Cooperation.

The Joint Communiqué of the Fifteenth Meeting of the Joint Commission of Cooperation was concluded in Pretoria, Republic of South Africa, on 10 August 2023, in the English and Persian languages, both being equally authentic.



Dr Naledi Pandor

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the Republic of South Africa



Dr Hossein Amir-Abdollahian

Minister of Foreign Affairs of the
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