



**“DIRCO Perspective” Media Briefing statement, DIRCO Media Briefing Room, Pretoria,
12 August 2024**

Opening Remarks by Minister Lamola:

We emphasised the consistent goal of achieving a more just and equitable African continent and world. DIRCO's work is crucial in realising this grand vision every day.

We have reassured everyone that there will be continuity in foreign policy, aligned with the Government of National Unity (GNU) vision. The parties in the GNU have agreed to work together to address the nation's most pressing challenges. President Cyril Ramaphosa indicated in his inauguration speech that the parties have committed to pursuing a foreign policy based on human rights, solidarity, and peace. They will also promote multilateralism for a fairer, more equal, just, and compassionate world.

We have committed to the well-being and professional growth of the team, encouraging them to take advantage of learning and development opportunities provided by the department.

We are also going to make it a point that through this department, we use economic diplomacy to address the fundamental challenges in South Africa. These are poverty, inequality and unemployment.

I look forward to working with all of you in 7th administration to make International Relations more accessible to every South Africa. International Relations is not abstract; it affects us in our everyday lives. Thank you.

DIRCO PERSPECTIVE ON ISSUES IN THE ENVIRONMENT

Bangladesh:

South Africa has noted political developments in Bangladesh. We call for calm and urge the transitional government to pursue peaceful mechanisms as they resolve the political challenges.

ISRAEL's Massacre of Children in GAZA

South Africa joins the international community in strongly condemning the attack on a school-turned-shelter for displaced Palestinians in Gaza that has killed more than 100 people, including women and children.

The Israeli Military claimed its air force on Saturday struck a "command and control centre" that "served as a hideout for Hamas terrorists and commanders" at Al-Tabaeen school but has not provided evidence to qualify the harming of defenseless civilians in its dangerous escalation.

South Africa is gravely concerned at the continuous targeting of schools, hospitals, medical infrastructure, and holy sites that are a source of shelter and protection for the civilian population who bear the brunt of the inhumane attacks in the Gaza Strip.

South Africa continues to maintain that there is no legal, ethical, or moral justification for the bombardment of non-combatants and destruction of civilian sites. Israel, as the occupying power, has a duty to protect civilians in Gaza. It is inhumane to endanger the lives of Palestinians who have sought refuge from intense bombardment and gun battles.

We call on the international community to act decisively against this deliberate attempt to derail the ceasefire negotiations and the unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe due to the ongoing violations of international law.

South Africa once again calls on the United Nations to deploy a rapid protection force to protect the civilian population from further bombardment.

Venezuela :

South Africa is closely monitoring the process in Caracas following the recent elections.

Minister Lamola has had a telephonic engagement with his counterpart in Caracas, His Excellency.. H.E. Yván Gil Pinto, Minister of the People's Power For Foreign Affairs of the Bolivarian Republic Of Venezuela, who gave an extensive and informative account of how the elections unfolded. Minister Lamola has welcomed that President Maduro, despite being declared a victor in these elections, has opted to subject the outcome to the Supreme Court. We reaffirm our support for the people of Venezuela to self-determination without the interference of external forces.

President Ramaphosa's Working Visit to Angola focussing on regional peace in the Eastern DRC

Last week, Minister Lamola and Minister Angie Motshekga joined President Cyril Ramaphosa on his Working Visit to Luanda, Republic of Angola, where President Ramaphosa held fruitful deliberations with the President of Angola, His Excellency João Lourenço.

The two Heads of State and Government discussed the security situation in the Great Lakes Region in general and developments in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in particular. in April 2024, for engagement with Presidents Museveni and Kagame.

South Africa welcomes the ceasefire agreement between the Government of the DRC and Rwanda, which was facilitated by Angola. Although the ceasefire was signed by the respective Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the DRC and Rwanda, the facilitation took place at the behest of President João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço in his capacity as the mediator of the Luanda Process. The ceasefire came into effect on 04 August and Angola will monitor its implementation.

South Africa and Angola are signatories to the 2013 Framework Agreement for Peace, Security, and Cooperation in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Region, alongside Burundi, the Central African Republic, the DRC, the Republic of Congo, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.

There are several initiatives aimed at achieving durable peace and stability in the Great Lakes Region and the DRC, such as the AU-endorsed dialogue process, which is facilitated by President Lourenço, known as the Luanda Process, as well as the Nairobi Process which is undertaken under the auspices of the East African Community and the International Conference on the Great Lakes.

The 43rd SADC Summit, which was held in August 2023 in Angola, approved the deployment of the SADC Mission in the DRC (SAMIDRC) for the initial period of 12 months, effective 30 September 2023. The deployment eventually commenced in December 2023 and was given the mandate to pursue, neutralise and dislodge the illegal armed groups. Three (3) SADC Member States, namely, South Africa, Malawi, and the United Republic of Tanzania pledged troops.

South Africa's International Relations and Co-operation engagements for the month of August:

Southern Africa Developmental Community Meeting: ZIMBABWE

This Week

President Ramaphosa will lead South Africa's delegation at the 44th Ordinary Summit of the Southern Africa Development Community for Heads of State and Government, which will be held in Zimbabwe. The Minister of International Relations and Cooperation will support him. The Republic of Zimbabwe will take over the Chairship of the Southern African Development Community.

This SADC Summit will be held under the theme: "Promoting Innovation to Unlock Opportunities for Sustained Economic Growth and Development towards an Industrialised SADC."

TICAD MINISTERIAL MEETING JAPAN 23 -25 August 2024

Minister Lamola will later in the month represent South Africa at the TICAD ministerial meeting in Japan. Japan remains an important and strategic partner to South Africa, with several Japanese companies in South Africa contributing positively to South Africa's unemployment challenges.

Preparations for South Africa's G20 Presidency

South Africa will assume the G20 Presidency on 01 December 2024 following the G20 Leaders' Summit under the Brazilian Presidency, scheduled for 18-19 November 2024 in Rio de Janeiro.

South Africa's G20 Presidency will be one of the largest national projects, requiring a whole-of-government and society approach. Preparation for the year-long calendar of meetings culminating in the Summit will require extensive coordination, collaboration, consultation, and cooperation across all sectors within South Africa and amongst other Member countries and International Organisations.

While processes are still underway to finalise South Africa's priorities for its G20 presidency, it is clear that this Presidency will provide an opportunity for South Africa to raise issues that are critical to the countries of the Global South, particularly those from the African Continent.

South Africa's Presidency of the G20 will provide a unique opportunity to bring to the fore the developing countries' needs, aspirations and ambitions. South Africa will use this opportunity to build on the efforts and successes of the Indonesian, Indian, and Brazilian G20 Presidencies.

South Africa has consistently championed development issues and prioritised the concerns of African and developing countries in the G20. It has also highlighted how a policy initiative intended to address a problem in a developed economy may have an adverse impact on developing countries.

We are also vocal advocates of the need to reform the global governance system, particularly the global financial architecture. While the calls for more rapid and fundamental reforms have grown louder in recent years, the debate must advance toward tangible outcomes.

The G20 Summit in 2025 will be the first on African soil. As part of its leadership of the G20, South Africa intends to hold meetings (both virtual and in-person) across the country from 01 Dec 2024 to 30 Nov 2025 and on the margins of major international conferences and meetings.

All provinces will be able to host both Ministerial and sectoral meetings. In this regard, the G20 Presidency will provide a significant opportunity for the Provinces, Cities, Municipalities, Traditional Authorities and other related stakeholders to promote their cultural, heritage, tourism and innovation industries to the tens of thousands of delegates and support staff, from some of the world's most developed and developing economies who are expected to be in South Africa throughout the year 2025.

Ends

Issued By The Spokesperson for the Minister of International Relations and Co-operation.

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