
Major South African Foreign Policy Trends and Issues for 2015

Keynote Speaker Dr Eddie Maloka

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Executive summary

2014 marked the celebration of South Africa's 20 years of freedom which coincided with the 5th democratic elections for the country. In this 20 year period, South Africa has held huge regional and international responsibilities that have come with vast array of activities and achievements such as: hosting the NAM Summit in 1998, the Commonwealth Heads of Government in 1999, the first Summit of the African Union in 2002, the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002, and CoP XVII in 2011 and indeed the inclusion into BRICS. As 2015 began, South Africa's Foreign Policy bears in equal measure of the hallmarks of continuity and potential ruptures, as such the aim of this workshop was to create a dialogue on Major South African Foreign Policy Trends and Issues for 2015.

The key note speaker for this event was Dr Eddie Maloka, Special Advisor to the Minister of international Relations and Cooperation of South Africa and South Africa's Special Envoy to the Great Lakes Region. He pointed out that his talk will be based on two 'prolonged' approaches:

- A quick scan of what possibly will be the key items of SA's Foreign Policy for 2015 (with much emphasis on the summit of the African Union [AU] that SA will be hosting in June, including to say what the key issues around the AU are currently)
- Thoughts on the 'United Nations at Seventy', with more focus on the UN reform, and what are the tactical issues that the continent should be looking at.

The aim of this event was to look at important issues that South Africa, through its Foreign Policy will be tackling from a national, regional and international outlook. The speaker, being someone who works closely with the Minister of International Relations and particularly a long serving member within DIRCO presented this event with a possibility of an important and crucial insight.

Other speakers included Ambassador Bene M'Poko, DRC ambassador to SA, who spoke on SA's role on the continent., Venetia Govender from Crisis Action who shared civil society views and Sandra Baloyi, the President of COSAS, who spoke on behalf of the youth.

Summary of Presentations

Ms Molly Dlamini (SALO), welcomed all members of civil society; of government departments, particularly of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation [DIRCO]; youth organization, particularly of the Congress of South African Students [COSAS], which was also represented and the ANC. She went on thereafter to introduce the key note speaker Dr. Eddie Maloka to the participants. With SALO's aim of the event being to look at 'Major South African Foreign Policy Trends and Issues for 2015' Ms Molly articulated the fact that Dr. Maloka presents the audience and participants an opportunity to indulge on his vast knowledge on the subject having had an opportunity throughout his career to work SA Foreign Policy (and as a to Special Advisor to the Minister of international Relations and Cooperation of South Africa).



Dr. Eddie Maloka's talk focused on the major upcoming events that South Africa will participating in, these are the summit of the African Union [AU] that SA will be hosting in June and the 'United Nations at Seventy' summit to held in September in New York. In terms of the AU summit, he gave his thoughts on what are the key issues around the AU are currently, and in terms of the UN focused on the UN reform, and the tactical issues that the African continent should be looking at going into the summit. He gave an overview of South Africa will engagement for 2015. He pointed out that the year 2015 presents many opportunities and challenges both within the continent and outside the continent. Key to these opportunities and challenges are bilateral relations, engagement with the South- South Cooperation, BRICKS, SADC, AU and

the UN. He gave a quick outline of all the important activities planned around these groupings and bilateral engagement, Dr. Maloka pointed out to the audience that South Africa's Foreign Policy faces an important task ahead due to the fact that:

You can't do diplomacy without bilateral engagements and beyond, and especially also the broad multi-lateral issues around SADC.

In terms the key issues for the African Union [AU] currently, Dr. Maloka pointed out that the big issue for the AU now is what is called Agenda 2063. He situated Agenda 2063 in Africa's post-independence development thinking, thinking around integration. Through this, Dr. Maloka highlighted a number of key milestones from the first one being from the 1980's around the Lagos Plan of Action; the second one is being the Abuja Treaty of the 1990's; and then the 1990's and the early 2000's were Africa had the famous Sirte Declaration of 1999. In terms of these milestones, he gave a thorough comparison of all of them and gave his thought on what brings them together and

what distinguishes one from the other. Through this analysis of these four milestones that the African continent has achieved, Dr. Maloka pointed out that Agenda 2063 should be seen a new lights. He argued that:

Agenda 2063 wants to position itself as a fundamentally different approach. It's more a 'Futures' perspective, more like forward planning, more like our National Development Plan. So it says; this is where we want Africa to be, but it's not saying this is the stage where Africa should be in 2063; it is a vision – or a message.

In terms of the United Nations (UN), Dr. Maloka gave his thoughts on the call for the reform of the UN and the Post-2015 negotiations that are currently underway. In terms of the reform of the UN/ UN Security Council (UNSC) he pointed out that Africa has an African Common Position, called the Ezulwini Consensus. This was adopted by the Executive Council and subsequently the Sirte Summit adopted it too and it became a decision of the AU. Highlighting its elements, Dr. Maloka pointed out that the African Common Position states that: Africa should have two permanent seats on the UN Security Council, representing an expansion for Africa in the permanent category, and those two seats must come with veto, the Ezulwini Consensus states that while Africa does not agree with the veto, as long as others have it, it is just and correct that it also has it. In terms of the non-permanent seats, currently Africa has three non-permanent seats, Ezulwini Consensus proposes that the continent gets an increase of these seats to five.

Dr Maloka pointed out that the other key negotiations for this year are in New York around Post-2015 and Paris later in the year around climate change. This has been essential to South Africa's foreign policy activities in the post-apartheid era and South Africa has become central to UN and Climate change negotiations. Dr Maloka reiterated that Africa's position is intact to SA's position in these platforms of discussions. Citing the post-2015 negotiations, he argued that South Africa's position is that it cannot have this discussion outside the African Common Position.

In his conclusion, Dr Maloka highlighted the fact that South Africa has set its sight on Africa development with more emphasis on institutional and infrastructural development so that the economy of the continent can thrive. He further noted that bilateral relations are crucial for the countries development agenda and aims, thus therefore there will be more bilateral activities and engagements. South-South cooperation is always in South Africa's agenda every year, as such therefore South Africa's activities will spread into engagements with the Global South. His discussion as an overview can be summed up as having concentrated on key engagements of South Africa's Foreign Policy in 2015 on the continent, globally and inside DIRCO had focussed a lot on the AU and the African continent.

Ambassador Bene M'Poko appreciated Dr. Maloka for giving the audience his views on South Africa's outlook for



diplomacy, arguing that indeed he has touched on the challenges of the continent, Africa's institutions and their challenges as we enter the year 2015. Ambassador M'Poko also highlighted the fact that Dr. Maloka's presentation went beyond the continent as he touched on some global issues. Touching on the history, the present and the future of South Africa's Foreign Policy engagements and activities as well as their possible challenges Ambassador M'Poko pointed out that the country so many responsibility and it has responded very well to them. He argued that:

"The 'New' South Africa was asked to run before it could walk – and that is a big challenge for any child, to run before he can walk. Because South Africa was a new kid on the block there was a lot of enthusiasm, but people forgot that South Africans spent many, many years fighting for their freedom and that a lot of energy was invested in trying to free themselves"

In terms of current developments within the continent the Ambassador highlighted the importance of Agenda 2063, promising that AU member states will implement it, at least a portion of it as we move forward. Acknowledging the fact that the implementation of policies and agreements cannot always be driven by the states, he called on the private sector and civil society to play an important role as these issues also affect them.

The ambassador reminded the audience that all African states have the potential to generate resources internally due to the vast wealth of resources all over the continent. What is lacking is the capacity to harness that potential. The continent has got a lot of wastage, more specifically within individual countries. In this regard, the ambassador called upon member states, civil society and the private sector to work together to deal with this challenge. It is time Africa rises to its potential, Ambassador M’Poko urged.

If Africa manages itself and its resources properly, it will be able to motivate other foreign partners to assist it, the ambassador pointed out. A failure to do this would present a huge challenge for the continent as the global community would lack the motive to assist Africa to prosper, as such resource management policies are vital for the continent to achieve its development targets and combat poverty. Therefore while Africa faces a lot of challenges, confident is there Ambassador M’Poko argued. He specifically noted that the continent has done tremendously well in trying to achieve peace and security. He articulated that Africa has to bring peace and security and there is no other way around that.

After achieving peace and security, the next challenge for the African continent will be to learn from the developmental process of other countries, more importantly how they have developed themselves. In this regard, the ambassador made reference to countries like Korea, Singapore and Taiwan. He concluded his speech by highlighting the importance of Agenda 2063 and the role that member states have to play. He argued that:

We on the Continent are making Agenda 2063 and so forth, but the vital resource that we need is knowledge. Without that, we will not get very far. You don’t need natural resources to develop – I have just given the examples of those three countries and there are more. Knowledge is what we require in order to carry out the programmes we have decided on. So I think if we tackle some of the challenges head on with our resources. I think we can go very far.

Contributions from the Floor

First Contributor: Former Deputy Minister Aziz Pahad

The former deputy minister thanked the keynote speaker Dr. Maloka for outlining of what he thinks South Africa wants to do in this year (2015) in terms of its foreign policy commitments. He agreed that indeed South Africa will have a very busy year. While acknowledging the fact that the country has a lot of responsibilities, domestically, regionally, continental and internationally, Mr Pahad asked about the strategic framework of the country’s foreign policy within which it is going to implement all these specific issues it seeks to engage with in order reach the objectives. He reminded the audience that globalisation is a reality and the African continent does not live in isolation from the world around it. A major question that South Africa and the continent at large must ask is, are going to be able to implement many of our policies? The former deputy minister argued. For him, unless South Africa looks at issues in the context of what



is going on in the world generally and on the continent, it will be difficult to achieve its foreign policy aims and objectives.

In terms of the Post- 2015, he reminded the audience that as the global community we still have not overcome the economic and financial crisis of 2007. He argued that:

“most of the countries in Europe and North Africa have gone down, and now even in China – its GDP growth is seven point five percent but it has gone down compared to what it was – and this means that there has to be less commitment, even than before, to give funding for real development”

In terms of peace and security dimension of SA’s foreign policy, Mr Pahad pointed out that Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab and the elements in Mali are now connecting up with the extremists in North Africa and the Middle East, and that is going to have very serious dangers for both SA and the continent in term of peace and security architecture. Relating the major points that have been made in the dialogue and reiterating the point of having a strategy and framework for South Africa’s Foreign Policy, the former deputy minister in his conclusion asked whether the country is working according the White Paper and whether it does link up with the National Development Plan in terms of the objectives South Africa seeks to achieve this year.

Response

Among many issues that Dr. Maloka addressed in his response, he pointed out that the issues raised by former deputy minister Aziz Pahad around strategy framework of South Africa’s foreign policy is vital. He argued that it is probably something that SA will have to look at, even at the ANC level. He pointed out that as the ANC is going to a National General Council at the end of the year, that plaform presence a good opportunity to look at the country’s foreign policy strategy framework. In that a major issue has to do with the future direction of South African foreign policy at a conceptual level. He said that:

*“I think we need to refine our concept of national interest, because we inherited from Comrade Aziz and from the Madiba period a honeymoon-based foreign Policy, with a world out there that was receptive to South Africa, the South Africa with the new constitution and so on. But the experience of real **politik** over the last few years is I think forcing us to begin to realise that sometimes we need to find a balance between our own domestic priorities, or domestic interests, and those of the Pan-African and of the global”*

Second Session

Venetia Govender an independent human rights and organisational development consultant, she has extensive experience working in South Africa, Zimbabwe and the SADC region in general. Ms Govender pointed out that it is not only the South African Government that engages in foreign policy or international relations; civil society has been part of this for a number of years. This engagement has been very much extensively in solidarity campaigns around places like Zimbabwe and Swaziland. She made reference of the fact that SALO was formed on the basis of trying to establish solidarity with the issues and organisations and people in Zimbabwe. In terms of influencing SA’s foreign policy, Ms Govender explained that normally for the civil society the emphasis has been around the kind of human rights abuses or the conditions that people labour under. This is on the hope that SA’s foreign policy agenda has some element of civil society role to some degree. Paying attention to



the keynote address by Dr. Maloka, she noted that Zimbabwe and Swaziland were not necessarily on list of priority countries, and she argued that from a civil society perspective:

“A number of us in this room are continuing to work on these countries. So my questions are: How do we influence to South African agenda? Where does one begin to engage in terms of that agenda?”

Sandra Baloyi, the President of COSAS articulated the fact that COSAS and all young South Africans condemn the use of learners as a tool of conflict in Africa. Relating this to the recent abduction of school girls in Nigeria by Boko Haram, she urged Africa to stop using learners as instruments of war and conflict. Linking learner within the framework and the structure of the global community, she maintained that COSAS believes that before “we can be learners, we are members of the community and therefore the struggles of our parents are our struggles”. Highlighting the importance of young people within the global development framework, she argued that as future generation, young people are ready to guard against and confront anything that will stand to threaten the future of Africa. In her concluding remarks, Ms Baloyi called upon the Africa continent to learn about itself and teach its youth to value themselves in ensuring the brightness of its future. She argued that bold young leaders are needed to stand up and take bold decisions and implement them.



Contributions for the second session

Among many responses **Mr Fadl Nacerodien from DIRCO** made reference to the point Ms Venetia Govender and pointed out that civil society engagement is critical. Yet he noted that the perception unfortunately is that SA does not engage civil society in its foreign policy activities. Mr Nacerodien disputed that perception, saying that SA does engage civil society as the government know very well its importance. He made an example of DIRCO’s presence at SALO’s dialogues including the day’s event, he further pointed out that DIRCO officials both former and current participating participate in various civil society platforms. DIRCO often invite civil society organisations into DIRCO where it engages them in similar seminars. So the question that needs to be asked is how to improve the depth and quality of these engagements, on the one hand, and on the second, maybe how to broaden them he concluded.

Response

Dr. Maloka also followed suit to what Mr Nacerodien had highlighted, he argued that DIRCO is always open to engagement, especially from civil society. He argued that Mr Nacerodien is DIRCO’s link with the outside world and civil society. In terms of current developments at DIRCO to strengthen civil society engagement. Dr. Maloka pointed out that the department is trying to establish a South African Foreign Policy Council which will bring civil society representation and so on, more as a sound board.

Conclusion



The Chairperson of the day, **Ms Molly Dhlamini of SALO** thanked Dr. Eddie Maloka, Ambassador Bene M’Poko, Sandra Baloyi and Venetia Govender for their presentations. She thanked the South African government and all the organisations who came through.

The analysis and recommendations included in this Policy Dialogue Report do not necessarily reflect the view of SALO or any of the donors or conference participants, but rather draw upon the major strands of discussion put forward at the event. Participants neither reviewed nor approved this document. The contents of the report are the sole responsibility of SALO, and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the donors who provided financial assistance for this policy dialogue session.

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The Southern African Liaison Office (SALO) is a South African-based not-for-profit civil society organisation which, through advocacy, dialogue, policy consensus and in-depth research and analysis, influences the current thinking and debates on foreign policy especially regarding African crises and conflicts.

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