



Policy Dialogue Report No: 51

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Executive Summary

In 2015, the Southern African Liaison Office (SALO) hosted its first dialogue workshop on 'Major South African Foreign Policy Trends'. The 2015 workshop received an overwhelming response, including a recommendation to annualise the dialogue, SALO, therefore, hosted a dialogue on the same theme for 2016 (March 15th), as part of an annual dialogue series. The 2016 dialogue examined foreign policy issues of South Africa in particular in the post-1994 era, due to the country's huge international responsibility, be it in peace and security or multilateral fora. The workshop also paid tribute to the keynote speaker former Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs in South Africa, H E Aziz Pahad for his 75th birthday.

The workshop aimed at providing a dialogue platform for understanding South Africa's foreign policy priorities and strategic direction for 2016 and it focused on the following key questions:

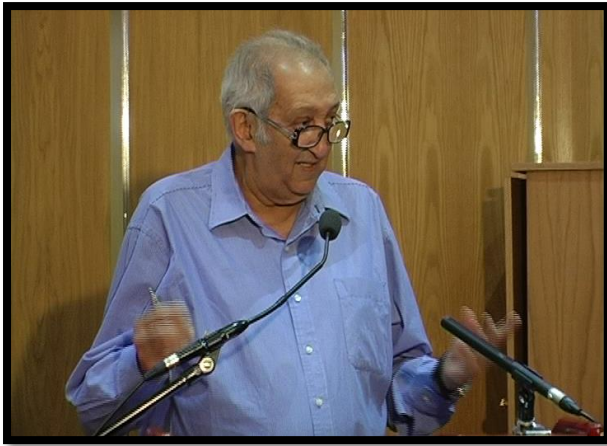
- What possibly will be the key items of SA's Foreign Policy for 2016?
- What are some of the key trends and considerations likely to inform the country's international engagements in 2016?

Besides, Mr Aziz Pahad, other speakers included; Ambassador Welile Nhlapo, first SA ambassador to the OAU, former SA Ambassador to Washington DC, former Special Envoy to the Great Lakes and former National Security Advisor in the Presidency. Respondents, were Shannon Ebrahim, Foreign Editor for Independent Media and Deprose Muchena, Regional Director for Southern Africa at Amnesty International.

The chair of the SALO board Bishop Rubin Phillip welcomed the participants, who included diplomats, members of civil society, the media, academia, youth and community groups, and members of faith-based organisations. Bishop Phillip highlighted that South-South and North-South cooperation are central pillars of the SA foreign policy and therefore argued that the European Union (EU) and SA have had a strategic partnership which is strengthened by formal dialogue. Bishop Phillip acknowledged SALO donors and partners for their support for SALOA's dialogues.

First Session – Presentations

Mr Aziz Pahad



Mr Aziz Pahad pointed out that in 2016, SA foreign policy will adjust to new realities and tactics that are taking place within the global community, as it has done in previous years. It may differ in interpretation, but it will be fundamentally based on the reality that the foreign policy of SA post-1994 has been based on creative interpretation of policies adopted since the formation of the ANC in 1912, which took into consideration the domestic, international and African geostrategic realities. The key to the formation of the ANC in 1912 was the articulation of the role that it should play both in Africa and the whole world. Mr Pahad highlighted some of the policies that the ANC adopted and what they meant regarding its role in

the future.

Mr Pahad argued that it was not a matter of accident or some imposed ideology that in 2016 SA's foreign policy will continue to be progressive, anti-colonialist, anti-neo-colonialist, internationalist and multilateralist. It will articulate quite clear how democracy and human rights are intertwined with economic and social rights, good governance, anti-racism, anti-tribalism, peaceful resolution of conflict, respect for sovereignty and equality of all states big and small.

SA's foreign policy always reflects its domestic priorities and national interest, the key to this according to Mr Pahad is the fact that SA's national interest demands that it rejects the notion that SA is a European outpost on the African continent, and recognised that SA's future is inextricably linked to that of Africa. Therefore, foreign policy discussion for 2016 cannot ignore some of the global characteristics that have been experienced in the 1990's and the 2000's. These include an unprecedented pace of globalisation and information technology; a unipolar world in which the USA emerged as a political, economic and military superpower with policies based on US 'exceptionalism'; an absence of balance of power in the global system; a lack of a common vision on global security and a growing militarisation of global diplomacy; the consistent disregard for the UN Charter and international law and increasing resort to unilateral action to mention just a few Mr Pahad pointed out.

In 2016 many governments, think-tanks and analysts have identified some major global trends which are largely influenced by previous trends and these include, the world economic and financial crisis, as the world is currently facing a new major catastrophic financial crisis. This has led the global community into a growing under-development, unemployment and inequality; leadership crisis at government and non-government levels; rising geo-strategic competition; urbanisation; the youth bubble; gender discrimination; climate change; intensifying manifestations of narrow nationalism resulting in the growth of Islamophobia; the proliferation of right-wing and neo-fascist organisations; Christian and Islamic religious fundamentalism; alienation and marginalisation; the rise and internationalisation of extremism and terrorism; the unprecedented migration crisis; and the threat to peace and security. All these, therefore, need to be at the centre of SA's foreign policy outlook for 2016, so that the country can respond to all these issues.

In 2016, SA will not try to develop new policies; it will try to determine whether it has the capacity for foreign policy development and implementation to meet these challenges. Central to this is the role of NGOs to ask relevant questions regarding their contributions to enhancing and enrich the existing debates on SA foreign policy; Mr Pahad pointed out. Regional integration is crucial for achieving SA's developmental agenda which is entrenched in the foreign policy, it should, therefore, be recognised that without regional integration all the policies that are adopted will not be sustained. He thus argues that this year (2016) and onwards DIRCO and other Ministries including all sectors of government should ask themselves, what progress have they made on

the lofty ideals that have been proclaimed by Southern African Development Community (SADC) and African Union (AU) and whether such policies have been implemented adequately.

He concluded by noting issues that will continue to be high on SA's foreign policy agenda and its voice in the global community and these include:

- ❖ Peace and security; as a matter of grave concern are the unprecedented migration crisis, particularly in Europe, where Europe is being torn apart, and the future of the EU is being debated.
- ❖ The Middle East; especially Palestine.
- ❖ The International Criminal Court (ICC); the end of 2015 came with a new agenda for South Africa's foreign policy, the need to revisit and review the role of the ICC.
- ❖ Climate change; this is an item on the agenda and the United Nations (UN) December 2015 Framework Convention on Climate Change, which was unanimously adopted in Paris will serve as the broad guidelines for SA's interventions on this issue.

Ambassador Welile Nhlapo



Ambassador Welile Nhlapo's presentation focused on the challenges facing the African continent, which SA will have to tackle particularly, peace and security given the fact that SA's role in the Peace and Security Council of SADC has been extended for the third time. This role itself comes with a lot of responsibilities for SA, and the country's foreign policy basis has long clarified that the priority will be the SADC region, the Africa continent and the global community respectively. This year (2016), SA's foreign policy leadership will once again be tested regarding sustainability and continuity of the work that SA has been doing, for example, the mediation role in Madagascar and Lesotho.

Highlighting some of the pressing peace and security issues for SADC, AU and the UN in the global system, Ambassador Nhlapo pointed out countries that remain cases of concern regarding peace and security challenges facing the African continent and they include:

- ❖ Lesotho; critical questions need to be asked regarding the approach that needs to be adopted by SA in dealing with Lesotho.
- ❖ The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC); the uncertainty about the election, whether they will take place in November as the constitution of the DRC demands or not. There is a massive clash on the question of the third term of the president that has not yet been resolved and the African continent, SA and the global community need to understand how to navigate all of those issues and deal with the situation
- ❖ Burundi; SA still has quite a lot to do concerning the previous crisis situations. The AU has endorsed dialogue as the key and has thus, responded by sending a high-level delegation of heads of state to try and deal with the processes in Burundi. Ambassador Nhlapo pointed out that the AU has two processes that are taking place and questioned how a relationship between the two can be struck, and these are: the internal dialogue that has been launched by President Nkurunziza and the dialogue that has been initiated by the East African Community?
- ❖ Central African Republic (CAR); as part of the SA mandate in the AU Peace and Security Council, it cannot ignore what is happening CAR
- ❖ South Sudan; it is vital for SA to try and deal with the complexities of this country.

Regarding the continental leadership within the AU Peace and Security Council, Ambassador Nhlapo pointed out that a robust and stable Nigeria in partnership with South Africa and others is vital.

Second Session – Respondents

The second session sought to get perspectives and possible contributions on what had been said in the first meeting. This would, therefore, contribute towards a media and NGO based outlook of SA's possible foreign policy trends and issues for 2016. In this session, Ms Shannon Ebrahim and Mr Deprose Muchena were the key contributors. The chair for this session Dr Showers Mawowa the , Research, Coordination and Development Manager at SALO thanked the previous speakers for their presentation and indicated how the first presentation by Mr Aziz Pahad was from a vantage point that sought to look at key issues that can be considered both in SA and across the globe, while the latter presentation by Ambassador Welile Nhlapo narrowed down its focus by considering South Africa's foreign policy role in Africa and the key issues it must seek to address in 2016.

Ms Shannon Ebrahim



In her presentation, Ms Shannon Ebrahim reemphasised the fact that Africa is at the centre of SA's foreign policy. She indicated SA's foreign policy in 2016 would focus on both SADC and the continent as a whole. For SADC, SA seeks to foster economic integration so that the region can effectively compete in the global economy. In this regard, there will be a strong emphasis on industrialisation, economic diversification and infrastructure building. Political integration has been at the centre of the SADC agenda. Therefore, Ms Ebrahim pointed out that the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security will be a focus area to make it more efficient in addressing the challenges of peace and security in the region.

SA's role in the continent working with other AU members has been to guide Africa's development trajectory, framework and roadmap for the next fifty years through Agenda 2063, is a quest to attain sustainable economic integration in the continent. Ms Ebrahim expressed that Regional Economic Communities (RECs) are pivotal to achieve Agenda 2063 and as such SA policymakers will be a focus on the Tripartite Free Trade Agreement between SADC, the East African Community and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), which make a grouping of 26 countries. Building infrastructure is vital for Africa so that it can create a safe environment for trade and investment, as such on the SA foreign policy agenda for 2016 will be a focus of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) Summit in December. Central to this China-Africa engagement will be a focus on the North-South Road and Rail Corridor, a lot of money has been allocated for infrastructure build across the continent in this regard.

Peace and security are crucial in attaining sustainable development and industrialisation, SA will, therefore, focus on ways of improvement of Africa's security architecture, with a focus on:

- ❖ Strengthening regional capabilities to respond to crises through early warning.
- ❖ Utilisation of the Panel of the Wise.
- ❖ Bolstering and empowering the Peace and Security Council as part of the recently elected membership.
- ❖ Good governance, democratisation and human rights; the challenges in the DRC point to the need for SA foreign policy to pay particular attention to the role of these two critical components of democracy in the continent.
- ❖ The voice of civil society and the political opposition; these are crucial as way of moving forward

In concluding her presentation, Ms Ebrahim highlighted the importance of both the region and the continent for SA's foreign policy. She argued that SA should prioritise ending the conflicts in Burundi, CAR, DRC, Lesotho and South Sudan as it has invested a lot of time and money in its effort to mediate and establish a

dialogue among clashing camps. She pointed out therefore that the primary focus of South Africa's policy in Africa should be to address these challenges, because:

"If we cannot get these countries right we'll never be able to put development on the agenda in a real way. I believe that's what our government will need to focus on this year."

Mr Deprose Muchena



Mr Deprose Muchena opened his presentation by highlighting the importance of re-examining the architecture of SA's foreign policy because it is now twenty-one-years-old. Major questions that have to be asked regarding this is whether SA's foreign policy is still capable of addressing the issues it faces given the changing political and economic landscape on the continent, in the region and across the globe. He argued that:

"There is a need to invite suggestions for re-thinking some of the tools that have been used, successfully so, in the last twenty years? I think it's an important question to discuss as we talk about foreign policy challenges and trends."

Furthermore, he argued that SA has to look at home and ask whether its foreign policy has contributed towards its domestic objectives in the past twenty years and how it has done so. Foreign policy successes are determined by obtaining its domestic goals, as the credibility of foreign policy instalments sometimes depends on what a country does internally. It is, therefore, important that SA strengthens its constitutional project, its rule of law credentials and tolerance for dialogue with civil society, so that it guards what it gained in 1994, Mr Muchena proposed. The internal strength for SA is vital as it serves as a basis for which it can have the moral standing on the continent, in the region and across the globe. He noted that there were many challenges that Africa is facing and the seeming reluctance of the AU to bring some of its members to book for violations. It is time the AU members called a spade a spade and not a big spoon and argued that the failure to do so would lead to a culture of impunity and creates an entitlement, especially on the party of those with state power.

Regarding other issues that SA foreign policy will face in 2016, Mr Muchena mentioned the anaemic global economic growth which, as he pointed out is a function of the limited recovery that has been seen since the global crisis. Therefore, as part of its foreign policy developmental commitment towards SADC and the African continent, SA needs to set its sight on being a lead driver of economic development in Africa through the initiatives that have already been highlighted. Highlighting the growing tensions in Zambia, Angola and Mozambique, Mr Muchena argued that it is essential for SA's foreign policy to reflect on these emerging issues as they pose a challenge in driving economic development in the continent. He further reaffirmed the fact that Zimbabwe continues to constitute a challenge towards SA foreign policy, as such the country should continue to be a central feature of SA's foreign policy.

Contributions from the floor

Some of the questions and contributions highlighted the issues of regional and continental economic and infrastructure development as key towards enabling improved living conditions for all Africans. As such, participants argued that SA's foreign policy should seek to put these as the primary objectives to achieve as Africa moves forward. Accordingly, the issue of peace and security is a pivotal part of the drive towards prosperity for both in SA, SADC and Africa as a whole, hence this needs to be clearly put on the top of the country's foreign policy agenda regularly. There is a strategic partnership between the AU and the UN,

between the Peace and Security Council of the AU and the Security Council of the UN; the problem is to see how this partnership could work in the best way.

Highlighting the progress that the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) have made towards a participatory foreign policy, stakeholders (civil society, labour and academia) participants noted the establishment of the new South African Council on International Relations (SACOIR) is vital. A major question regarding this was: to what extent is SACOIR going to speak truth to power and make recommendations that are in strengthening the voice of all relevant stakeholders?

Responses by the Presenters

In response, presenters highlighted the importance of the panel of experts in reviewing the work of deployed missions on the continent. **Ambassador Nhlapo** pointed out that these missions are often not smooth-sailing operations. He proposed that the global community should not be simplistic about the solutions that it is trying to seek. Instead, it should engage and come towards a clear understanding of key challenges it faces. Addressing the point of re-examining the post-1994 foreign policy, former **Deputy Minister Pahad** argued that it would be critical to begin by clearly stating what it means to reconsider a foreign policy and what would that pose to the already established values and objectives. He argued that many elements inform SA's foreign policy and therefore, any discussion to re-examine it would need to be well articulated.

Regarding the SACOIR, **Mr Pahad** argued that as a very new baby consisting of academics, trade unionists, NGOs, business people and the youth, SACOIR still needs to be set out before questions are raised about it. He maintained that it is a very important platform for interacting with civil society and assisting to help look at policies that SA has implemented and where these can be criticised. Furthermore, it will play a major role in both formulation and implementation of SA's foreign policy moving forward through looking at where the country can do some real assessments. Moreover, the council will serve as an early warning system for DIRCO regarding problems that are going to emerge in the future.

For **Mr Muchena**, SA's role in the AU and many other positions have given decency to Africa; he pointed out that the establishment of New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) has dignified Africa in the face of the world. This has extended Africa's voice in economic debates globally, as it represents a common position of all African countries, Mr Muchena argued. He concluded that as broadly as it is, SA's foreign policy identity and efforts have been consistent when it comes to creating a developing and prosperous Africa. **Ms Ebrahim** commented on the core values of SA's foreign policy and argued that they are very good and very solid; those are human rights, good governance, democracy, peace and security. She pointed out that these are very well articulated values that underpin SA's foreign policy, and therefore they should be applied by SA towards its quest of challenging the issue of human rights violations.

Closing Remarks – Mário Rui Queiró, Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of South Africa

In his closing remarks, Mr Mário Rui Queiró thanked SALO for a successful dialogue and pointed out that the full room attests to the interest and the pertinence of the discussion. He argued that the participants have benefited from the in-depth knowledge and insight on SA foreign policy from the Mr Pahad and Ambassador Nhlapo. He argued that countries in crisis indeed should be considered as part of SA's foreign policy drivers as mentioned in the presentations. Mr Queiró concluded by stating that the EU has been working with SALO for some time now and considers SALO as an important partner in its EU-South African Dialogue.



Conclusions

The aim of this engagement for all stakeholders was to address the issue of under-development, poverty and inequality as one of the most strategic challenges facing SA. It is thus, critical for the SA to perform its duties and fulfil its role as a prominent member of the global system and to acknowledge the issue of human rights, good governance and democracy, as engrained and written in the Constitution.

In his final point, Mr Pahad reminded the participants that the crisis of global economic and political governance is real given the complexity of the challenges that humanity faces. It is, therefore, self-evident that no country or selected grouping of countries can tackle these challenges outside the UN system, it is hence, vital to avoid divisions in the UN system. A fundamentally transformed UN is crucial, and SA will continue to advocate for that transformation more particularly in the UN Security Council level.

The last twenty years SA has invested very heavily on the continent and therefore SA a huge player in the mainland Mr Muchena pointed out, in conclusion, hence, SA's values and internal democratic credentials are critical in providing leadership. Ambassador Nhlapo concluded by arguing that these are some of the challenges that SA is going to face regarding migration and other issues that the continent is trying to deal with because the EU is also finding itself in far-reaching difficulties. He then posed a question on how to continue building relations, and consolidating relations with the EU, if there's no dialogue?

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.

About the Southern African Liaison Office:



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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