**4. Report of the Portfolio Committee on International Relations and Cooperation on a mission of conducting oversight on the implementation of the Joint Commission of Cooperation between South Africa and the Islamic Republic of Iran and the execution of South Africa’s international relations policy, in Teheran, Iran and Doha, Qatar from 9-12 May 2015, dated 3 May 2017**

The Portfolio Committee on International Relations and Cooperation, having conducted oversight on the implementation of the Joint Commission between the Republic of South Africa and the Islamic Republic of Iran; and further on the execution of South Africa’s international relations policy in Tehran, Iran from 9-11 May 2015, and an oversight visit in Doha, Qatar on 12 May 2015, reports as follows:

1. **Purpose**

In terms of sections 55 and 92 of the 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, the Portfolio Committee on International Relations and Cooperation (the Committee) is mandated to oversee and ensure accountability in the formulation and conduct of the South African international relations policy. Consequently, the Committee conducts oversight on the activities of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (the Department) including its missions abroad, on; policies, financial spending patterns, administrative issues, and hold the Department accountable for its operations and functions.

The Department is further responsible for developing and maintaining bilateral political and economic partnerships in the various regions of the world. This is usually pursued through structured bilateral mechanisms such as bi-national commissions (BNCs), joint national commissions (JNCs) or joint commissions (JCs). These bilateral mechanisms remain important vehicles for cooperation and promoting South Africa’s national priorities as reflected in policy documents such as the National Development Plan (NDP). Through bilateral relations, the priority needs of Africa and the South are also pursued, and most importantly, these relations exist for the promotion of South Africa’s trade, investment and tourism potential.

In response to the stated important responsibility of the Department, the Committee’s remit also extends to ensuring that the country’s foreign policy is driven by the country’s domestic economic, political and social demands. Hence the Committee is also responsible for monitoring the implementation of structured bilateral agreements (mechanisms) with these different countries of the world, to ensure compliance with international obligations undertaken. The Committee has to also ensure that the structured bilateral engagements address domestic goals of eradicating poverty, lowering inequality, creating jobs and accelerating trade and investment.

This report serves to outline the engagements of the delegation of the Committee (herein after simply referred to as, the Committee delegation) to Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran, and Doha, Qatar, in pursuance of the following objectives:

The first leg of work of the Committee delegation begun with oversight on the implementation of the Joint Commission between the Republic of South Africa and the Islamic Republic of Iran which took place from the 9-11 May, 2015. The second leg was on oversight over the execution of South Africa’s international relations policy by South African embassies in Tehran, Iran, which took place on 11 May 2015; and in Doha, Qatar, on 12 May 2015.

**Members of the Committee delegation**

Hon Adv LKB Mpumlwana – African National Congress (ANC), Leader of the delegation

Hon Ms TE Kenye- Member of the ANC

Hon Ms C Dudley – Member of the African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP)

**Official**

Ms L Mosala Content Advisor to the Committee

**2. Executive summary**

The Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Honourable Maite Nkoana Mashabane, had invited the Committee to send a delegation to join the South African delegation to Tehran, Iran for the 12th Meeting of the Joint Commission between the Republic of South Africa and the Islamic Republic of Iran. The joint meeting took place from 9-11 May 2015. The invitation had invited the Committee delegation to also conduct oversight on South African missions in the United Arab Emirates.

The Committee delegation left South Africa on 8 May 2015 for Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran, on a mission to conduct oversight on the processes aimed at the implementation of the Joint Commission between the Republic of South Africa and the Islamic Republic of Iran. The 12th Meeting of the Joint Commission between the Republic of South Africa and the Islamic Republic of Iran took place from 9 -11 May 2015. The Committee delegation also conducted oversight on the conduct of international relations policy in South African embassies in both Tehran, Iran and Doha, Qatar.

The Minister had proposed that the Committee delegation also visit South African embassies in Dubai and Abu Dhabi (UAE countries), but due to short notice of the invitation, the required processes in Parliament could not be fulfilled on time. Consequently, the Committee delegation only did work in Tehran and Doha.

The arrangements made by the South African embassy in Tehran were such that the Committee delegation would be in attendance in the following meetings: the 12thJoint Commission as stated; meeting with the Chairperson of the Committee for Foreign Policy and National Security of Iran; be in attendance in the business forum at the Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture; meeting with the Speaker of the Iranian Majlis (the Parliament of Iran); and meeting with the counterpart Committee on Foreign Policy and National Security of Iran. However, due to unforeseen circumstances the Committee delegation did not have meetings with the counterpart committee, the Speaker of the Iranian Majlis, Parliament of Iran and the Chamber of Commerce meeting.

1. **The 12th Meeting of the Joint Commission, South Africa-Iran**

The 12th Meeting of the Joint Commission between the Republic of South Africa and the Islamic Republic of Iran was regarded as one of the most successful bilateral engagements South Africa has had with many countries. It culminated in the adoption of a Joint Communiqué that outlined specific, practical steps that the two countries have agreed to undertake in order to deepen our political, diplomatic, trade and investment ties.

The South African delegation at the 12th Iran-South Africa Joint Commission was the biggest and strongest to ever visit the Islamic Republic of Iran. The delegation included the Deputy Minister of Trade and Industry, over 40 senior government officials, 60 members of the business community and three Members of Parliament.

The Joint Commission made a commitment to ensure implementation of all agreements between South Africa and Iran. Seven working groups identified a wide but focused range of key areas of future cooperation. The meeting set out deliverable projects and programmes that are time-bound and outcomes-based. Among these were initiatives in education, energy, health, investment, mining, transport, agriculture, science and technology.

Apart from the implementation of existing bilateral agreements, the Ministers also took advantage of the Joint Commission to discuss a range of developments internationally and in their respective regions, including reform of global institutions of governance. They also discussed developments relating to the political agreement recently reached in the nuclear talks as well as the conflict in Yemen.

Regarding the nuclear talks, South Africa reiterated its position that Iran has an inalienable right to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, in line with the provisions of the Nuclear Proliferation Treaty (NPT). South Africa was said to have had a rare distinction of having acquired nuclear weapons and then voluntarily dismantling them.

Like Iran, South Africa firmly believes that the Middle East should be made a Nuclear Weapons Free Zone, as South Africa has done in Africa with the Pelindaba Treaty. In this regard, the South African government would continue to encourage and support Iran as it works towards a comprehensive agreement in the nuclear talks. It was the hope of South Africa that the final outcome would be fair and just to the people of Iran, and that the sanctions would be lifted without delay.

Regarding the conflict in Yemen, South Africa joined the Secretary-General of the United Nations in expressing its grave concern about the fate of civilians in the conflict and disturbing humanitarian situation. South Africa was calling for an immediate ceasefire and a political solution by facilitating and promoting an inclusive Yemeni-led dialogue towards the establishment of a broad-based unity government. South Africa was appreciative of the constructive role that Iran continues to play in international organizations and, in particular, its role as current Chair of the Non Alignment Movement (NAM), where it has made able use of its leadership to actively champion the cause of developing countries.

In their remarks at the Joint Commission, both Ministers expressed their satisfaction with the strong relationship that exists between the Islamic Republic of Iran and South Africa, as well as the progress made since the 11th Joint Commission which was held in Pretoria in 2013, to strengthen political, economic and cultural ties between the two countries. Both Ministers expressed the desire to see the relationship being further expanded and consolidated.

1. **Audience with Honourable Alaeddin Boroujerdi, the Chair of the Committee for Foreign Policy and National Security of Iran**

The meeting with the Chairperson of the Committee for Foreign Policy and National Security of Iran (counterpart committee) equipped the delegation with the synopsis of how eager the Iranian Parliament was to ensure that the Joint Commission between South Africa and Iran is implemented for purposes of improving lives of citizens of both countries, and to ensure closer relationship between the people of the two nations. The Chairperson went further to indicate that Iran desired to expand cooperation with South African Parliament, especially committee to committee to strengthen ties. As a foreign policy watchdog committee of Parliament in Iran, it fully supported policies of government to close ranks with South Africa and rejuvenate the relationship between the two.

The Chairperson of the Iranian committee further expressed his appreciation for the relations with South Africa and wanted them cemented, more so, the parliamentary relations should be established and promoted. In the past there had been active relations before sanctions, after sanctions not very active, and felt abandoned by South Africa. The sanctions have not shaken the resilience of the Iranian people. China has been trying to close up with Iran during sanctions and trade with China and assistance have increased tremendously.

**Regional politics**

Iran wished for economic growth and peace in the Middle East region. In the regional context, Afghanistan was unstable. The presence of the UN forces has failed to provide security in Afghanistan. Iran wished for the region to address hunger and peace in Pakistan. Reference was made to a helicopter crash in Pakistan which carried some VIPs including ambassadors to that country were killed; the South African ambassador was among the survivors. The group was being shown the devastation caused by floods in the high plains of Pakistan.

Iran was being threatened with attacks by the so-called Islamic State (ISIS). In the meantime the regional force comprising among others, Turkey and Saudi Arabia were bombarding Yemen resulting in untold levels of humanitarian suffering. In Iran’s view, terrorists are being sent into Syria by Western powers to destabilise Syria. This phenomenon extended to the United Kingdom, France and US who were trying relentlessly to change the political landscape in Syria and the region as a whole.

The chairperson’s view was that if Assad is unseated, another Libya will be created and that would orchestrate a threat to Iran. Assad had bowed to pressure from the west regarding chemical weapons, but clearly the west was pushing for a regime change. So it is in the interest of Iran to fight any form of terrorism in the region lest it is used to distabilise regional operators. In Yemen, Saudi Arabia was continuously bombarding civilians in Yemen, not even allowing humanitarian relief to be brought in. The Port of Aden could not be accessed to send in some form of relief.

In Africa, Boko Haram should be addressed and dealt with. There were also pockets of terrorists in Mali and Libya.

It was reiterated that Iran needed assistance to fight international terrorism, some of the groups therein have been listed as such by the United Nations, and ought to be dealt with. The people being trained as terrorists in Turkey and Syria were recruited from the west also.

Iran has undertaken negotiations with the European Union about the regional situation, and these resulted in the agreement with the Permanent Five members in the UN Security Council on the Iranian nuclear deal. Some Arab countries were not pleased with the deal, because of their own Zionist approach to issues around Iran, namely that Israel is vehemently opposed to any dealings with Iran, to the extent that Prime Minister Netanyahu went to address Congress on the issue. Some US Congressmen have advised Iran that the deal might not succeed as Israel does not want sanctions against Iran lifted. This has created an element of mistrust and a sense of unfair play and Iran has to be cautious of US’s commitment to the nuclear deal.

The international community was said to be waiting for the underscored changes. Russia and China were ready to jointly deal in nuclear for peaceful use for economic growth and innovation. This development has not been taken well by the US and the EU, only proving to Iran that some western countries do not wish for sanction against Iran lifted.

It was mentioned that the Speaker of the Iranian Majlis-Parliament has extended an invitation for the Speaker of the South African to visit Iran; and that the parliament to parliament (friendship group) relationship be formalised. Furthermore, it was felt that it was imperative that committee to committee engagements should be formalised to ensure oversight on the implementation of the South Africa-Iran Joint Commission agreement for the upliftment of the lives of the people of both countries.

In response, Hon Mpumlwana, Leader of the Committee delegation, confirmed the need for closer working relationship between the two committees of Parliament. This would strengthen oversight and ensure the implementation of the agreement on the Joint Commission between South Africa and Iran. He undertook to convey the message for the creation of friendship groups to the Office of the Speaker of Parliament of South Africa. The Leader of the Committee delegation highlighted the importance of the historical relations that have existed between the African National Congress (ANC) and Iran as far back as before 1994. The Committee delegation commended the vigour, patriotism and resilience shown by the Iranian people when faced with the challenges of sanctions and isolation.

He further pointed out that the United States of America (USA) has been involved in many conflicts around the world, however all its efforts have only proved its miscalculation of events and factors around the conflicts it involves itself in. The USA has miscalculated the outcome in its approach to the Syrian issue. Furthermore its miscalculation has been demonstrated now with ISIS, as this organisation is now targeting and terrorising all governments through terrorism. However, the Leader of the Committee delegation reiterated that South Africa remained steadfast in its resolve to stand with the people of Iran in all its trials and tribulations, and that the two committees should look into what needed to be done to address international terrorism.

1. **Meeting with the South African embassy in Tehran**

The Committee delegation was met by the Deputy Head of Mission, Mr Ahmed Ismaeel Samaai and Mr Nzaliseko Sifuba, who was temporarily serving in the mission for a specific task. Members introduced themselves and explained they were in the mission to assess how the embassy was discharging its mandate, in terms of the execution of foreign policy prescripts, especially in the advent of a reduced budget overall for departments. Members expressed interest in being informed on the political landscape of Iran and how sanctions have affected livelihoods in the area; accessibility of the embassy by South Africans, including foreign nationals who seek assistance from the embassy; welfare of staff in general; security for the chancery; health related issues and the effectiveness of ROSA; whether the premises of the chancery and residence were on lease terms or owned.

**Responses**

The Mission began its brief on the work of the embassy by pointing out that as a Mission it has been put under Category 4 by headquarters, meaning that it is a ‘Hardship Mission’. The reasons given were that the conditions were very difficult at times, as Ethiopia can pose some challenges to the welfare of the transferred personnel due the effects of economic sanctions.

The staff of the mission explained that there were five (5) transferred officials and thirteen (13) locally recruited personnel (LRPs). Livelihood in Iran was burdened and hard hit by the international sanctions imposed on Iran due to its nuclear energy capabilities. However, Iranians were found to be a resilient people, they have survived the sanctions and isolation and found ways to do a lot with less and are self-sufficient. Due to the effect of sanctions on the economy of the country, the mission is one of them designated as ‘hardship posts’. The mission encouraged that trade with Iran should continue to grow, and South Africa should deal with the oil embargo in a way that will benefit its own national interest.

However, it was recognised that the mission was heading for busy times, judging from the big delegation of government departments and business who had attended the 12th Meeting of the Joint Commission with Iran. There would be follow-ups with counterparts in Iran, therefore the mission would also benefit from being well capacitated with additional personnel including a Trade Attaché and Home Affairs official.

**Premises: Chancery**

The office block was acquired during the apartheid era, that is before 1994, and has been rented, for an equivalent of R22 000 a month. The lease period is for two years (expiring in the month of September) renewable each time, with rent having to be paid in advance for every lease period. However, with the requirement to comply with the PFMA, and due to the reduced budget for the medium term, the embassy was to negotiate to effect an advance payment for one year only. The feeling was that if it were an owned building, it would save the mission some money.

**Official Residence:**

The Official Residence was purchased by the apartheid government, however, there were no registration papers available to proof ownership of the building. The Department had been requested to locate the documents in its archives. The building is well kept in a good area of Tehran.

**Welfare issues**

The cultural practices of Iran were a challenge especially regarding the dress code which affects women officials in that they have to comply with the Islamic way of dress, including covering their heads, necks, arms and lower body. The medium of communication in schools is Persian (Arabic); and there was no provision for high school in English except for the Pakistani and Indian International schools in Tehran.

Due to shortages of essential goods and services caused by sanctions, there was very limited choice of foodstuffs in the shops. As is the practice with ‘hardship posts’, officers were normally allowed to get foodstuffs from South Africa at least twice a year. The Mission reported that this practice and privilege had been interrupted, and guidance had been sought from the Department as to the alternative for getting foodstuffs not available in Iran.

Officers posted to South African missions abroad are entitled to Foreign Service allowance, which is meant to augment salaries of personnel serving abroad. In some countries, the standard of leaving is much higher than that of South Africa. In others is lower, so these allowances are meant to bridge the gap and try put the relevant personnel in a liveable position while serving abroad. It was reported that the Department has since reduced, without prior warning to the personnel concerned, the allowances for serving abroad for staff of the mission, and explanation has been sort in this regard.

Iran was reported as having very good private hospitals. However, the medical fees at times were very high, leaving officers unable to pay for medical expenses cover in advance.

**Consular services**

The Mission provided consular services to South Africans leaving in Iran and companies operating there. There was also a Visa section, however the Home Affairs personnel left in 2013 and there has been no replacement since then. However, interaction with Iran and the visa applications have increased significantly in the past five years of the mission, making it imperative that Home Affairs place an official in Tehran.

There were foreign exchange challenges in Iran as a result of sanctions. The banks were not conducting business with foreign currency because of the restrictions; operating costs of the mission and all transactions have to be paid in cash. The Mission personnel had to travel to Dubai to access cash in dollars, raising security concerns regarding ferrying of huge amounts of cash across borders.

The Committee delegation then made an inspection in loco and observed that the office building was very old; access to the chancery was insecure as there was no diplomatic security guard at the main gate; the building is attached to a block of residential flats, which further compromised security; behind the building is a primary school with noise levels rendering some degree of disturbance when conducting business within the Mission. The signboard was not easily visible due to the limited space on the building to display the name of the embassy; parking space was very small and narrow, making it a challenge to park more than two cars comfortably.

There were security upgrade recommendations which were made by relevant security agents of government, but the Department had not yet implemented the same. The building had no off-ramp access, rendering it inaccessible by people with disability.

The mission was to reduce into writing some of the issues they raised which they could not elaborate on them due to time constraints.

1. **Meeting with South African Mission in** **Doha**, **Qatar**

The Committee delegation paid an oversight visit to the South African mission in Doha, Qatar, on 12 May 2015. The delegation was welcomed by Ambassador Cachalia to the mission. The ambassador gave an overview of political country profile of Qatar and the issues influential to the political and economic landscape in that country.

It was reported that in essence, Qatar is a constitutional monarchy headed by Emir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al Thani. The population was approximately 1.7 million, of whom approximately 225,000 are citizens. The Emir exercises full executive power. The 2005

Constitution provided for hereditary rule by the emir's male branch of the al-Thani family. Sharia (Islamic law) is a primary source of legislation. It was reported that the Emir approves or rejects legislation after consultation with the appointed 35-member Advisory Council and cabinet. It was pointed out that there are no elections for national leadership, and the law forbids political parties.

The key feature of Qatar’s foreign policy was its role as a mediator and negotiator in a number of conflicts in the Middle East and elsewhere, for example in Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Iraq, Israel and the occupied territories, Lebanon, Sudan and Yemen. In each of these situations, Qatar has prided itself on reaching out to warring factions to push them to reach political settlements or *rapprochements*, as well as providing humanitarian assistance.

While it could be argued that painting an image of the country as a benevolent mediator was a public diplomacy move by Qatar—since neutrality makes it easier to cultivate credibility among multiple audiences—there were more profound motivations behind Qatar’s expansive approach to mediating conflict and, by extension, its foreign policy. The first motivation was reported as the maintenance of its own security and stability. Qatar is located in the Arabian Peninsula, an area rife with political and military rivalries. By increasing its international profile, Qatar aims to protect itself from the perils of small-state anonymity and vulnerability—perils of the kind from which Kuwait suffered in 1990.

In addition, by engaging in mediation between conflicting factions such as the Houthis and the Yemeni government, or between Hezbollah and its allies on the one hand and the Lebanese March 14 bloc on the other, Qatar could be seen as attempting to contain those conflicts and prevent their spreading closer to home.

This imperative were regarded even more acute when considering the role that Iran had been playing in those conflicts and in the Gulf specifically. Iran has been Hezbollah’s main supporter, and has established links with the Houthis in Yemen and a number of Shi’i movements in the Gulf. Qatar also shared the world’s largest oilfield with Iran, and was acutely aware of Iran’s own foreign policy goals in the region. By trying to mediate between Iran-backed non-state actors and their rivals, Qatar was attempting to counter Iranian influence in the Middle East generally, and more specifically in the Gulf, while maintaining cordial relations with Iran. Thus, in addition to general motivation for Qatari mediation, was a desire to expand its influence as a regional player, particularly *vis-à-vis* Saudi Arabia. The Saudi Kingdom has traditionally played a leading role in conflicts across the region, for example during the Lebanese civil war.

However, in recent years Saudi Arabian mediation has been vitiated by a perceived lack of neutrality, rendering the Kingdom an active player (situation in Yemen) as opposed to a neutral mediator. Qatar thus perceived a vacuum in Arab international relations which it has been attempting to fill. Its involvement in conflicts across the Middle East and beyond represented an effort to present itself as a viable alternative to Saudi Arabia and a potential new leader in the Middle East. This role was bolstered with Qatar’s membership of the UN Security Council in 2006–2007, a period that saw the emirate increase its regional mediation and assistance activities.

Qatar was reported dominated by the Sunni, and the country was regarded important because of its role in the Middle East. It is regarded as secure, and has the biggest American base outside the United States. Qatar was said to have supported the Arab Spring, sponsored the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt; supported Hamas in Palestine; was close to Iran; and has supported African Union mediation efforts in South Sudan.

**Mission-specific issues**

The Mission had five (5) transferred officials from South Africa and six (6) locally recruited personnel (LRPs). The Chancery and Official Residence were secured on a three-year term basis, with rent payable in advance. The Committee delegation observed that the building was secure, and had a wall around it. The signage depicting the name of the embassy was visible and parking was secured behind the wall. Artefacts, pictures and the display featured very clearly important images about South Africa. The official photos of the executive and those of the struggle heroes and heroines were visible at the entrance, and on the wall were also pictures of South African children born in Qatar from parents residing there. The overall ambience around the entrance hall depicted a warm South African welcome.

The Consular section of the embassy was well secured with a private entrance and a counselling room in case citizens of South Africa came seeking that kind of assistance. The Consular section had a record of South Africans living and working in Qatar. These were often invited to the embassy during national celebrations. The embassy has also devised a way of popularising the Registration of South Africans Abroad (ROSA), in that every South African coming to the embassy was registered accordingly.

There was no Home Affairs official attached to the Mission, much as the volume of visa applications was increasing. The Gulf area was regarded a breeding place for human trafficking, as the kingpins travel through the Gulf States, to traffic people to South Africa, as a result of this threat, there is a dire need for a Home Affairs officer in the Doha Mission. Again there was no seconded Trade Attaché and trade with Qatar was on the increase. There were a number of South African companies operating in Qatar, including Sasol and Nandos. South Africa was exporting meat, fruit and vegetables and some products of some retail shops in South Africa were increasingly being displayed on the shelves of many shops.

It was further reported that recently young South African men and women were being recruited in big numbers and they mostly work for South African companies situate in Qatar. It was reported that Qatar does not encourage citizenship, and therefore to live and work there, one is supposed to be sponsored by a resident of Qatar. People were often deported resulting from major or minor crimes that they get involved in. It was reported that a 60 years old South African was serving sentence in prison then in Qatar, because he could not pay back in full his overdraft (loan) from a bank in Doha. The Mission was in the process of developing an emergency evacuation plan in case a need arises to ensure South African citizens in Qatar are safely taken out.

The embassy’s view was that owning property, much as it would work out cheaper on the long term, would be costly for the Mission at its present state taking into consideration the cost of security upgrades and investment in the building. Being in the Middle East, security was considered a key consideration for an embassy. In Qatar, land belongs to the king and it can only be leased to embassies and foreign nationals on a ninety-nine (99) year lease condition. The Mission had a utility car and the official car.

The embassy drew the attention of the Committee delegation to some challenges faced by the Mission in its operation. There was a concern that the processing of applications for the issuance of passports in Pretoria took too long, rendering clients discontent with service by the Mission. The processing of lease agreements at headquarters took long, resulting in some cases, the Mission not able to secure properties they had earmarked for renting. Education for young children was difficult, with the medium language of instruction being Arabic. Health wise, living in Qatar one is exposed to a lot of dust, increasing chances of chest diseases. It was also reported that at other times the temperature reaches maximum of 40 plus degrees, and people would normally be advised to stay indoors. This was a new phenomenon to people from South Africa.

The Committee delegation left Qatar for Cape Town on the morning of 13 May 2015.

**8. Recommendations**

The Committee recommends the following course of action regarding the visit to Iran:

* The Minister of International Relations and Cooperation should ensure that the Department of International Relations and Cooperation address the issue of a vacant position of a Home Affairs official who would handle visa requirement matters.

Report to be considered.

**ANNEX: Communique from the Joint Bilateral Commission between South Africa and Iran**

1. **The relevant paragraphs of the Communique from the Joint Commission are quoted from paragraph 9 hereunder:**

**“Political and Social issues:** **Bilateral:**

9- The two sides exchanged views on their bilateral relations and expressed the importance the two countries attach to their strategic bilateral relationship. They agreed to continue working together to intensify collaboration and strengthen cooperation in all areas of mutual interest as reflected in discussions of the following Working Groups, namely:

* Political and Social
* Economic and Technical
* Energy
* Finance and Banking
* Science and Technology
* Agriculture
* Water and Sanitation

10- Working Groups were guided by the following principles:

* Assess the current areas of cooperation and the implementation status thereof. Review the progress achieved since the last JC
* Identify key areas of future cooperation
* Determine deliverable projects/programs that are time-bound and outcome-based
* Stipulate/identify responsible individuals/entities/focal points for both countries in order to secure implementation
* Identify challenges if any and propose possible solutions and high-level political intervention if required
* Each Working Group is to identify at least one or two achievable projects within the short term

**Security:**

11- Both parties agreed to create a Working Group to explore collaboration in the area of security.

12- Possible areas for cooperation include information exchange, regional security, border controls, narcotics-trafficking, human trafficking, disaster risk management, international organized crime as well as terrorism and extremism.

**Nuclear Talks between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the P5+1:**

13- Both countries stressed that all state parties to the NPT have the inalienable right to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. The choices and decisions in this regard should be respected without prejudice and should not negatively affect its policies or international cooperation agreements and arrangements for the peaceful use of nuclear energy and its fuel-cycle policies within the framework of the NPT.

14- South Africa congratulated the Islamic Republic of Iran for the positive manner in which it has been conducting the nuclear talks with the P5+1 and welcomed the political framework agreement reached in April 2015. It further expressed the hope that a final comprehensive agreement will be reached soon and all sanctions lifted without delay.

**Human Rights:**

15- The two sides agreed to strengthen their bilateral cooperation in the field of human rights in the international fora in particular at the United Nations in New York and Geneva. They further agreed to promote the role of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in pursuing the NAM common positions in the Human Rights Council as well as issues of high priority for the NAM Member States.

16- The two sides expressed their concerns over the rise of racial discrimination globally, and called upon all countries to genuinely implement the Durban Declaration and Plan of Action. They emphasized that, despite efforts in this regard, millions of human beings continue to be victims of marginalization, racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, including in their contemporary manifestations.

**Women and Family Affairs:**

17- The two parties welcomed cooperation in the field of women and family affairs and emphasized the willingness to further enhance bilateral cooperation in this area. The Iranian side presented a draft "Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the area of Women and Family Affairs". The South African side agreed to consider and respond to the MOU at the earliest convenience. Once agreed by both parties, the MOU will be signed by the Vice President for Women and Family Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Ministry of Women in the Presidency of South Africa.

**Youth:**

18- Emphasizing both countries commitment and potentials in the area of youth, the parties support mutual cooperation through regular exchange of delegations as well as to discuss an MOU.

**Sport:**

19- Emphasizing the development of relations in sport, the two parties agreed to support mutual cooperation in the field of sport through exploring the signing of an MOU as well as exchange of delegations.

**Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism:**

20**-** The Iranian Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization announced its readiness to negotiate with South Africa in order to finalize a new MOU on Tourism.

21**-** The Iranian Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization indicated its willingness to develop scientific and practical cooperation between the two countries in the field of Cultural Heritage, including best practice, skills development and exchange programs.

22**-** The Iranian Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization also confirmed its readiness to enhance cooperation between the two countries in the field of investment and handicrafts.

**Education:**

23- Both sides agreed to promote cooperation between universities including twinning as well as exchanging academics and students.

24- In order to expand and develop scientific and educational cooperation, both the Ministry of Education of the Islamic Republic of Iran and its South African counterpart voiced readiness to discuss an MOU on Education and Training. In this respect, a draft copy of the MOU shall be exchanged through diplomatic channels.

25- Both parties expressed their readiness to exchange experts in various educational and cultural areas.

**Archives and the National Library:**

26- Emphasizing the need for further cooperation between the two sides, the Organization for Documents and National Library of the Islamic Republic of Iran submitted a draft MOU for promotion of cooperation to the National Library of the Republic of South Africa. It was decided that the South African side shall consider the draft and inform the Iranian side of its views in order to finalize the MOU.

**Health:**

27- The two sides agreed to improve the level of mutual relations in the health sector and in particular to discuss collaboration in the following:

* Pharmaceutical and Medical Equipment
* Medical Education and Research
* Hospital Construction and Design
* Health Tourism
* Health Systems Management
* Exchange of Physicians including the extension of work permits for the Iranian Physicians currently working in South Africa

28- Both parties agreed to exchange technical teams to further explore collaboration and cooperation in the above-mentioned areas.

**Media:**

29-The two sides agreed to increase cooperation in the Media sector. The Iranian side provided South Africa with a draft MOU for consideration, discussion and eventual signature.

30-Both parties discussed the exchange of audio-visual programs and committed to encourage commercial exchanges of media and entertainment, including feature films, documentaries and animation.

31-Both sides agreed on skills training workshops in areas of mutual interest.

**Regional:**

**Africa:**

32-South Africa briefed the meeting on the latest developments in Africa, particularly Agenda 2063, and the African Union Road Map on African development. The meeting was informed that South Africa will host the 25th Summit of the African Union on 14-15 June 2015. H.E. Minister Maite Nkoana-Mashabane extended an invitation to H.E. Minister Zarif to attend the Summit both in his capacity as Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Chair of the Non Aligned Movement.

33- Views were exchanged on peace and security issues in Africa, particularly the situation in South Sudan, Somalia, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo and Libya.

34- Discussions also focused on the challenges posed by all terrorist and extremist groups to peace and security in Africa.

**The Middle-East (Yemen, Iraq, Palestine and Syria):**

**Yemen:**

35- Expressing their deep concern over the deterioration of the humanitarian situation in Yemen, the two sides called for an immediate cessation of military operations against Yemen and emphasized the necessity of providing critical humanitarian assistance for the Yemeni people. Both parties called for strict adherence to international humanitarian law by all parties involved in the conflict. The two sides also called for the political settlement of the current crisis in Yemen by facilitating and promoting an inclusive Yemeni-led dialogue towards the establishment of a broad-based unity government.

**Syria:**

36- The Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of South Africa, while recognizing the Syrian People and Government's fight against terrorism, called on all countries and international organizations to give priority to the unfortunate and devastating conditions of the displaced and war-affected Syrian People by taking immediate action to provide humanitarian assistance.

37- The Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of South Africa, while supporting political initiatives for the conclusive settlement of the Syrian crisis through Syrian led national dialogue to end the sufferings of the people, emphasized the need to avoid further escalation of violence in that country.

38- Both sides denounced the double standards on the issue of terrorism. They extended their full support to the Syrian People and Government in addressing this heinous phenomenon and called for the intensification of the regional and international collective efforts in combating terrorism. The two sides called upon all countries to adhere to the UN Security Council resolutions in particular resolutions 2170, 2178 and 2199 in the fight against terrorism in Syria.

**Palestine:**

39- The two sides denounced the aggressive and illegitimate acts by Israel in Occupied Palestine, continuation of the Gaza siege, construction of Jewish settlements and insults against the Holy Sites in Al-Qods. Both sides expressed their support for the continued resistance by the Palestinian People and emphasized the establishment of sustainable peace in the Middle-East, the observance of all fundamental rights of the oppressed Palestinian People, including the rights of the displaced Palestinian People to return to their home-land.

**Iraq:**

40- The two sides reaffirmed their full support for the Iraqi Government and People in their fight against terrorism. They emphasized the need for the international community to assist Iraq in dealing with the so-called "ISIS" terrorist acts and extremism.

**Multilateral:**

**United Nations:**

41- Both parties noted that this year marks the 70th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. They agreed that this presented a unique opportunity to expedite the reform of the United Nations, including the Security Council. The Islamic Republic of Iran expressed its support for Africa to have permanent representation in a reformed United Nations Security Council.

**Non-Aligned Movement (NAM):**

42- South Africa commended the Islamic Republic of Iran for the able manner in which it continues to chair the NAM. As the current chair of the G77 plus China, South Africa pledged to increase cooperation with the Islamic Republic of Iran as Chair of NAM in addressing issues of regional and multilateral concern.

**War against Violence and Extremism (WAVE):**

43- Both parties expressed support for the initiative by H.E. President Dr. Hassan Rohani to promote international solidarity and cooperation through the War against Violence and Extremism (WAVE). In this regard, they welcomed the endorsement of the WAVE Initiative by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).

**Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA):**

44- Both parties expressed their support to further strengthen the IORA. They welcomed the establishment of a Core Group on the Ocean Economy. The Islamic Republic of Iran expressed its full support for South Africa as the incoming Chair of the IORA in 2017. South Africa expressed appreciation to the Islamic Republic of Iran for hosting the Regional Center for Science and Technology Transfer (RCSTT) of the IORA.

**Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa (BRICS):**

45- The Islamic Republic of Iran welcomed the positive role BRICS is playing in advancing the interests of the South in global affairs. They further welcomed the creation of the New Development Bank and its African Regional Center. The Islamic Republic of Iran expressed its interest to cooperate with BRICS in areas of mutual interest. South Africa, while supporting the idea, agreed to convey the Islamic Republic of Iran's willingness for cooperation to the BRICS countries.

**B. Economic and Technical:**

**Trade:**

46- Both sides assessed the level of economic and commercial relations between the two countries. They emphasized the need to develop strategies to significantly expand trade cooperation. They also agreed to address obstacles and challenges through bilateral exchanges, meetings between companies and the private sectors.

47- The Iranian side announced its readiness to establish an Iranian Trade Center in South Africa in cooperation with the private sector. Both sides agreed to participate in each other's exhibitions.

48- The Iranian side expressed a desire to enter into a Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) with Southern African Customs Union (SACU). South Africa encouraged the Islamic Republic of Iran to interact directly with the SACU Secretariat.

49- Both sides emphasized the mutual exchange of trade delegations for commercial and industrial development. The Islamic Republic of Iran announced its readiness for a business delegation to visit South Africa in August 2015. South Africa expressed its readiness to cooperate in this regard.

50- Both sides agreed to develop a joint road map to identify short, medium and long term initiatives. The Islamic Republic of Iran provided a draft and South Africa will provide feedback in due course.

51- The Islamic Republic of Iran announced that it will appoint a Commercial Attaché in South Africa to facilitate and further develop mutual cooperation in trade.

52- Both sides agreed to participate in each other’s key sectoral exhibitions, including Mining, Tourism, Capital Equipment, Agro Processing, Oil, Gas and Petrochemicals.

53- Both sides agreed to co-operate in their respective regional blocs including SACU, Southern African Development Cooperation (SADC) and Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO).

54- Both sides agreed to explore an MOU in the field of trade promotion through collaboration between the Iranian Trade Promotion Organization (ITPO) and Trade and Investment South Africa (TISA).

**Investment:**

55-Both sides agreed to strengthen information exchanges regarding laws, policies and regulation, as well as project details related to economic and technical cooperation and investments. They agreed to encourage exchange of business delegations across sectors and support companies to explore opportunities for wide-range and high level cooperation.

56- In order to expand mutual relations and promote foreign direct investments, both sides agreed to hold specialized seminars to introduce investment opportunities and projects.

57- In order to enhance economic cooperation, the Iranian side presented South Africa with the following draft MOUs.

* Public – Private Partnership (PPP) Cooperation
* Capital Market Cooperation
* Economic and Technical Cooperation
* Insurance Cooperation
* Establishing Joint Investment Committee

The South African side agreed to channel the respective MOUs to the relevant entities and provide feedback within six months.

58- Both sides expressed their willingness to encourage their respective private sectors to participate and prioritize areas such as oil, gas and petrochemical industry, mining, agriculture and infrastructure.

59- Both sides encouraged cooperation on trade financing and underwriting through Export Guarantee Fund of Iran (EGFI) and the Export Credit Insurance Council of South Africa (ECIC). The Export Guarantee Fund of Iran expressed its willingness to provide credit coverage to potential South African buyers against acceptable guarantees by ECIC.

**Industry:**

60- Both sides agreed to explore co-operation on industrial development and technology transfer.

61- Both sides agreed to share expertise to establish and develop industrial and techno parks, negotiate and explore feasibility studies thereof including the development of industrial clusters.

62- Both sides undertook to promote investment in each other's Special Economic Zones and Industrial Parks and serve as focal points for each other's companies in this respect.

63- Both sides agreed on technical cooperation and to draft an MOU to be negotiated and signed within six months.

64- The Islamic Republic of Iran submitted a list of projects and opportunities for investment in the industrial sector and invited South African investors and companies to utilize these opportunities.

**Local Economic Development:**

65-Both sides agreed to cooperate on the following:

* Outline a modality for people contribution (Cooperative Governance)
* Development of urban and rural tourism
* Smart Transportation and Traffic Systems
* Water and waste management

66- Both parties agreed to explore twinning arrangements between identified provinces and cities. The Iranian side will provide a list of proposals in this regard.

**Cooperatives, Labour, Social Protection:**

67- The Ministry of Cooperatives, Labor and Social Welfare expressed its desire to sign an MOU on cooperation in the field of cooperatives and SMEs in the near future.

68- The Ministry of Cooperatives, Labor and Social Welfare proposed a draft MOU on cooperation in the field of “Labor” and “Social Protection”. They expressed their readiness to exchange information and experiences in the fields of labour issues, infrastructure, training and skills development, technical exchanges, as well as economic partnerships in national development projects.

69- South Africa took note of the proposals and undertook to convey it to the relevant entities and will provide a response at the earliest possible time.

**Rail Transportation:**

70- Both sides agreed to inform each other timely of the holding of exhibitions in the transportation and rail sectors as well as encourage participation therein.

71- Both sides expressed their willingness to exchange experiences in the fields of knowledge design, construction and development of infrastructure, including super structuring, repair and rehabilitation of freight, passenger wagons and electrical machines. They also agreed to the training of technical and engineering personnel including the exchanging of academics and students.

72- Both sides encouraged cooperation in the manufacturing of rolling stocks such as freight wagons, passenger coaches, metro cars, locomotives and bogies. It was agreed that the list of the relevant manufacturers will be exchanged through diplomatic channels.

**Maritime Transportation:**

73- Both sides agreed to fully implement the Agreed Minutes of the 3rd Joint Port and Maritime Committee. Iran expressed its readiness to host the 4th Session of the Joint Committee. It was agreed to explore cooperation in the fields of search and rescue, preventing and combating marine environment pollution, maritime transportation and the Ocean Economy.

74- Both sides expressed their commitment to finalize the Memorandum of Understanding on sister-port relationship between the ports of Shahid Rajaee and Durban, which was submitted to the South African side during the 3rd Joint Port and Maritime Committee. Both sides agreed to finalize the MOU in the coming months.

**Mining and Geology:**

75- Both parties announced their readiness to establish a Joint Committee on Mining and Minerals. They agreed to jointly work on mineral projects, technology and skills transfer, project management, feasibility studies and mining equipment development.

76- Both sides encouraged the conclusion of an MOU for cooperation between the Iranian Mineral Processing Research Center (IMPRC) and South Africa's Mintek.

77- Both parties expressed their readiness to cooperate in implementing joint exploration projects, joint studies on mineral processing, management of natural geological hazards. The two sides also agreed to cooperate in the fields of geology, marine geology and exploration geology and associated equipment.

78- The Islamic Republic of Iran submitted a list of opportunities for investment in the mining sector and industry and invited South African companies and investors to utilize these opportunities.

**Energy:**

79- The Ministry of Petroleum of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Ministry of Energy of the Republic of South Africa, have agreed to cooperate in the following areas:

* Export and import of crude oil and oil products
* Supply of mini Liquid Natural Gas (LNG) and mini Gas To Liquids (GTL) feedstock subject to technology transfer and financial documents to be approved by the Iranian Petroleum Ministry
* Facilitation for investments in mini LNG and mini GTL infrastructure
* Export of petrochemical products to South Africa
* Joint Research in petrochemical process and GTL technology
* Investment and Development in Refinery and petrochemical projects
* Skills development and knowledge sharing

80- The Ministry of Energy of the Republic of South Africa and the Ministry of Energy of the Islamic Republic of Iran have further agreed to cooperate in the followings:

* Renewable energy procurement, development and investment
* Energy efficiency knowledge and product sharing
* Capacity building of SMEs in the energy sector
* Manufacturing, maintenance and repair of power turbines
* Construction of power plants
* Skills development and knowledge sharing

81-The Ministry of Energy of the Republic of South Africa and the Ministry of Energy and the Ministry of Petroleum of the Islamic Republic of Iran have further agreed to establish two Committees for the purpose of monitoring the implementation of the identified projects, namely:

* Crude Oil, Gas and Petrochemical Committee
* Energy Committee

**Finance and Banking:**

82- Both sides have agreed to enhance relations between financial institutions of the two countries.

83- Both sides noted current impediments to the relationship between their financial sectors mainly due to sanctions, and expressed their willingness for further technical work to address such impediments taking into account the regulatory frameworks and standards governing their financial sectors.

84- Both sides expressed their willingness to strengthen links between the financial sectors of the two countries particularly with regards to the banking sector, in order to further expand mutual trade and investments opportunities between the two countries.

**Science and Technology:**

85- The Science and Technology Committee discussed cooperation activities under the Science and Technology Agreement signed between the two countries in 2000. In this regard, the South African side extended an invitation to the Iranian Science and Technology Delegation to visit South Africa on the occasion of the 4th Joint Committee on Science and Technology. The objective of the visit will be to discuss a program for cooperation in Science and also to visit the South African Science and Research Institutions.

86- The two sides agreed to develop cooperation in the following areas which will be formalized during the planned 4th Joint Science and Technology Committee in South Africa, namely:

* Biotechnology
* Marine and Oceanographic Studies
* Renewable Energy
* Agriculture and Food Science
* Promote human resources and skills development in various fields of cooperation

87- The two sides agreed to organize a workshop in South Africa, preferably during the planned visit to elaborate the above-mentioned areas of cooperation which could result in joint research amongst scientists.

88- In addition, the representative of the Iranian National Institute of Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (NIGEB) will visit South Africa in the near future to develop cooperation especially in the field of biotechnology with the Universities of Johannesburg, Cape Town, Pretoria and other related institutions.

89- Both sides expressed satisfaction with the agreed steps in strengthening the scientific cooperation between the two countries and are looking forward to the 4th Joint Science and Technology Committee to be held in South Africa in June 2015.

**Agriculture:**

90- The two sides agreed to finalize the draft MOU on Agricultural Cooperation.

91- The two sides acknowledged the areas of cooperation reflected in the Agreed Minutes between the Ministry of Jihad-e-Agriculture of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of South Africa. This was informed during the meeting between the Deputy Ministers of Agriculture, Dr. Rokni and General Bheki Cele during his visit to the Islamic Republic of Iran on 26 February 2015 implementation of the agreed minutes was reiterated.

92- In addition to the areas identified in the above-mentioned agreed minutes and in collaboration with the South African Department of Trade and Industry, information on investment opportunities in aquaculture will be shared with the Iranian side.

93- South Africa expressed its willingness to facilitate an inward trade and investment mission to South Africa comprised of Iranian companies in the agricultural and agro processing sectors through the Department of Trade and Industry. The Ministry of Jihad-e-Agriculture of the Islamic Republic of Iran will encourage the Iranian business sector to participate in the mission.

94- Both sides expressed mutual willingness to expand trade in fresh produce (fruits and vegetables), meat, seafood, beverages and processed food products.
95- In accordance with the formal invitation received from South Africa, the Iranian Deputy Minister of Jihad-e-Agriculture, Dr. Rokni will undertake an official visit to South Africa in the near future.

96- Both sides agreed to encourage mutual cooperation and participation in exhibitions, seminars, technology transfer, conferences and workshops related to agriculture held in each other’s respective countries.

97- Both sides agreed to exchange information on each other’s capacities (volumes, prices and quality) and trade in agricultural products.

98- Both sides expressed their willingness to dispatch expert delegations to begin negotiations on Agricultural Protocols.

**Water and Sanitation:**

99**-** Both parties agreed in principle on the text of the Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the field of Water Resources Management. They further committed to finalize the MOU through their respective legal processes for signing.

100- Parties have identified opportunities of cooperation in water and sanitation industry in the followings:

* Water and waste water
* Hydropower plants, irrigation channels and drainage systems
* Waste water treatment equipment (pipes, connections, water meters, hydro mechanical valves, etc.)

101- In this regard, both parties agreed to establish a Water and Sanitation Forum under the auspices of the South Africa-Iran Business Forum led by the respective Departments of Trade and Industry in South Africa and the Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade of the Islamic Republic of Iran and further to commit to collaborate and expand trade in the appropriate areas.

102- Both parties agreed to collaborate on water related knowledge and experience sharing including their readiness to exchange required skills.

103- South Africa identified the need to exchange technical expertise (engineering skills) in the area of infrastructure development. This will be discussed further during the Iranian delegation's visit to South Africa.

**Appreciation:**

104- The South African Delegation, led by Minster Maite Nkoana-Mashabane, expressed its deep gratitude to Minister Zarif and the Government and People of Iran for the warm hospitality extended during the visit.

105- Both parties agreed that the next session (13th) of the Joint Commission will be held in South Africa at a mutually agreed date. With regard to the latter the intention was to assess the South African Mission’s contribution towards strengthening the relations with Iran.”