**4. Report of the Portfolio Committee on International Relations and Cooperation on Budget Vote 6: International Relations and Cooperation, dated 2 May 2018**

The Portfolio Committee on International Relations and Cooperation (the Committee), having considered Budget Vote 6: International Relations and Cooperation of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (the Department), reports as follows:

1. **Introduction**

The Committee met on 25 April 2018 to consider the Department’s Annual Performance Plan (APP) 2018/19. The Committee further discussed the African Renaissance and International Cooperation Fund’s (ARF) Annual Performance Plan 2018/19, together with the Department’s overall budget allocation for 2018/19.

1. **Briefing by the Department on Budget Vote 6: International Relations and Cooperation**
   1. **Presentation by the Department on its 2018/19 and Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) expenditure focus**

Deputy Minister Luwellyn Landers gave a political overview of the global situation under which the Department had to operate. He indicated that the substantial budget cuts announced by the government would have impact on the operations of the Department. However, the Department would still be able to navigate and achieve its set objectives. The Deputy Minister highlighted that the Department would continue to implement budget cuts through a steady reduction of the number of the Locally Recruited Personnel (LRPs) in South African missions abroad. The other concerning development was that the National Treasury has since requested the African Renaissance Fund (ARF) to hand-over its surplus of R1,6 billion from 2017/18. He pointed out that according to the ARF Act[[1]](#footnote-1), accumulated surplus would be carried forward as a credit in the Fund to the next financial year. The concern was that if this practice continued, the ARF would be faced with a limited financial leverage to discharge its mandate.

The Department reported that the overall mandate of the Department is to work for the realisation of South Africa’s international relations policy objectives. The foundation of South Africa’s foreign policy was built on a desire to promote South Africa’s national interest and values, the African Renaissance and the creation of a better world for all[[2]](#footnote-2).

It was highlighted that the Department derived its responsibility from the Constitution[[3]](#footnote-3) and the National Development Plan (NDP) 2030. Its mandate is further detailed in the 2014-2019 Government’s Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF).

The Department was also reported as guided by the White Paper on South Africa’s Foreign Policy, which directed the future focus of the Department. Outcome 11 of Government’s 2014-2019 medium term strategic framework was also on the Department. Under this, the Government sought to “Create a better South Africa and contribute to a better and safer Africa in a better world”, further articulating the vision of South Africa in the regional, continental and international arenas.

1. **Overarching mandate**

**3.1 National Development Plan**

Chapter 7 of the NDP envisioned South Africa as a globally competitive economy and an influential, leading member of the international community. The plan saw South Africa as promoting and contributing globally to sustainable development, democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and peace and security.

The NDP has focused on the need to enhance South Africa’s position in the region and the world, and to increase trade and investment. The plan further states that the country’s foreign policy should be shaped by the interplay between diplomatic, political, security, environmental, economic and regional dynamics that define international relations. The plan envisions the country positioning itself as one of Africa’s powerhouses, leading development and growth on the continent; and deepening integration with the Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa (BRICS) group of countries.

**3.2 State-of-the-Nation Address 2018**

In his maiden State-of-the-Nation Address, President Cyril Ramaphosa confirmed the impetus of South African solidarity with the people of Western Sahara towards a referendum which would enable them to decide their destiny. The diplomatic ties with Israel were also to be downsized to a liaison office, and solidarity with the plight of Palestinians strengthened. South Africa would continue with the efforts by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to resolve political conflicts in Lesotho, the Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan. Regional integration of SADC was of great importance and the deepening of relations with the BRICS countries.

1. **Situational analysis around the world**

Foreign policy is conducted in a very unpredictable performance environment. It was reported that South Africa’s foreign policy is implemented within a highly dynamic and challenging global environment that is often volatile, unpredictable, complex and ambiguous (VUCA).

It was indicated that globalisation continued to shape the world at an accelerating pace. Global trends such as rising populism, global economic imbalances, the emergence and societal impact of social networks and climate change, were increasingly influencing the way the countries of the world relate to one another. Furthermore, the geopolitical trends such as change of leadership in influential countries; rise of anti-immigrant nationalism in the European Union (EU) and the United States of America (US); increased terrorism as well as the ideals of the Fourth Industrial Revolution might also have an impact on the performance environment.

It was reported that the prevailing advancement in information and communications technology transcends sovereignty, international boundaries and regulatory systems. This has caused an accelerated massive flow of information in ideology, ideas and capital across the world.

It was highlighted that South Africa’s diplomatic service is conducted within a dynamic environment with varying foreign legislative contexts and unstable monetary regimes, that impact on the resources of the Department. In view of the increasing demands being placed on the national fiscus and the drive to curtail the public sector wage bill, departments have to operate within a set ceiling of compensation of employees. The Department found itself affected by the ceiling which has been set below the existing wage bill, leaving the Department with very little room to maneuver.

The world population growth is skewed across the wealth lines with the developed world dealing with an aging population, and developing countries experiencing a youth bulge. This demographic pattern has huge social and political impact as well as serious economic consequences.

1. **Planned policy initiatives**

The Department conducted its affairs and operations in a global environment, with circumstances and conditions which were often vastly different and diverse from the policy context within South Africa, which governs the Public Service. The Department has tabled a Foreign Service Bill in 2015, to cater for the unique work environment in which it operates. It is envisaged the Bill would allow the Department to fulfil its administrative and management responsibilities within the framework of the South African legislation. It would also create the necessary flexibility to address the challenges posed by it operating in a global level.

South Africa’s outgoing cooperation funding has been governed by the African Renaissance and International Cooperation Fund 2000 (ARF). This fund has catered for initiatives between South Africa and other countries that relate to the promotion of democracy and good governance among others. At the operational level, the Fund has been experiencing challenges due to strategic and operational inefficiencies within the fund.

As a consequence of these challenges over the past years, in 2009 Cabinet approved the proposal for the establishment of the South African Development Agency (SADPA), as the body to manage, coordinate and facilitate all South African official outgoing development cooperation programmes and projects. There were processes to table a Partnership Fund for Development Bill in Parliament in 2018/19, aimed at an improved coordination of South Africa’s diverse development partnerships[[4]](#footnote-4). The Department reported having completed a draft strategic framework and policy guideline for all outgoing development cooperation to be administered under the agency.

1. **Measurable objectives of the Department**

The Revised Strategic Plan 2015-2020 has been categorized into six key priority areas. This is in order for the Department to contribute to a better life for all South Africans as pronounced through the State of the Nation address 2018, with the aim of responding to the domestic priorities as announced by government for the 2018/19 financial year as follows:

* Enhancing the African Agenda and Sustainable Development;
* Strengthening political and economic integration of the Southern African Development Community (SADC);
* Strengthening of South-South Relations;
* Strengthening of Relations with the strategic formations of the North;
* Strengthening of Political and Economic Relations;
* Participation in the Global System of Governance.

1. **Overview of the Department’s strategic outlook and budget for 2018/19; and the MTEF expenditure focus**

**7.1 Strategic outlook for 2018/19: Annual Performance Plan 2018/19**

According to the Department’s Revised Strategic Plan 2015-2020, the Department would continue to operate in a dynamic environment that combines varying legislative and monetary regimes that impact on its foreign policy operations. In 2018, South Africa maintained diplomatic relations with countries and organisations through 124 missions in 106 countries abroad, and through the accreditation of more than 160 countries and organizations resident in South Africa.

The spending focus over the MTEF would be on advancing national priorities through economic and political relations. The Department would work in pursuit of the national imperatives outlined in Chapter 7 of the National Development Plan and Outcome 11 (Create a better South Africa, a better Africa and a better world) of the 2014-2019 medium term strategic framework. The Department would focus on consolidating South Africa’s global economic, political and social relations, advancing an equitable, just and representative rules-based multilateral system; pursuing a sustainable developed and economically integrated Africa; and the regional integration of the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

There would be a concerted focus on economic diplomacy to contribute to South Africa achieving the vision and goals as espoused in the NDP. The Department would also focus on enhancing its operational capacity. It would also continue with its ongoing development and management of its infrastructure projects and properties.

In the light of the dynamic global environment, South Africa’s international relations is aligned to and support the southern African regional agenda. Consequently, the regional integration agenda remains key continental development. This is in line with the particular emphasis on improving the political and economic integration of the SADC.

The Southern African Customs Union (SACU) and SADC are considered primary vehicles for regional economic integration. They are regarded important building blocs to achieve the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)-East African Community (EAC)-SADC Tripartite Free Trade Area (TFTA) and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), which was launched in March 2018. Under the AfCFTA, the African nations commit to cut tariffs on 90% of goods with the aim of increasing intra-Africa trade. It was further indicated that the AfCFTA has created the largest free trade zone since the creation of the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

However, it was pointed out that for SACU to play its role in the economies of the member states, it would have to be transformed. This would assist to promote equitable development, sustainable infrastructure development and industrialisation. Peace, security and stability are considered prerequisites for sustainable economic development on the continent.

South Africa took over the Chairship of SADC from August 2017 to August 2018, under the theme “Partnering with the Private Sector in Developing Industry and Regional Value Chains”. With this theme, South Africa seeks to provide guidance on a pragmatic contribution towards the accelerated implementation of the SADC Industrialisation Strategy and Roadmap. South Africa’s envisaged deliverables during its Chairship focus on maximising efforts towards identifying high-impact cross-border projects which boost manufacturing and create value chains in the region.

The Department recognised the collective efforts required by Agenda 2063 to strengthen the organs of the African Union (AU), particularly the Commission. It should be empowered to play a central role in the implementation of the continental development plan. South Africa believed that aspirations of Agenda 2063 could be realised not only in conditions of peace and security, but also within the environment entrenching good economic and political governance. The Department recognised the efforts made by the continent in finding solutions to its own challenges. South Africa is committed to the AU’s resolve to silence the guns by 2020 through collective efforts. In this regard, South Africa welcomed the progress made by the AU since the adoption, in January 2017, of the AU Master Roadmap on Practical Steps on Silencing the Guns in Africa by the Year 2020.

Similarly, South Africa is pleased with the progress made in the implementation of the AU Agenda 2063 First 10-Year Implementation Plan. This included the launch of the Single African Air Transport Market in January 2018. Thus, commendable progress has already been made in realising Africa’s aspirations through flagship projects.

There has also been further strengthening of cooperation between the AU Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) and the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). This would enable Africa to achieve this Agenda 2063 goal of realising an Africa at peace with itself.

Notwithstanding the political stability experienced in the greater part of the Sub-Saharan region, there were still pockets of instability in South Sudan, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Central African Republic, Lesotho and Mozambique as well in the areas of the Great Lakes, the Sahel and the Lake Chad Basin. South Africa would continue to play its part in the AU and SADC efforts to find lasting solutions to the prevailing political conflicts in these areas. In this regard, South Africa remained resolute to continue and strengthen its support for the people of Western Sahara in pursuit of their inalienable right to self-determination and decolonisation.

South Africa would remain committed to the strategic partnership relations with formations of the North. Western Europe remained a key strategic region for South Africa for continued engagements and the search for opportunities related to Operation Phakisa and unlocking the Ocean’s Economy. The partnership would further assist in identifying vocational training and scholarship opportunities. This would be in order to provide the workforce with necessary skills required to fill the gaps in the country’s labour market and for attracting trade and investment from the region. The European Union (EU) thus remains South Africa’s largest trading partner and largest foreign investor.

South Africa would continue to engage with the United States of America (US) with a view to enhancing bilateral and multilateral cooperation in areas of mutual interest. The benefits that South Africa receives through the African Growth and Opportunities Act (AGOA) have resulted in the creation of approximately 62 000 jobs in South Africa. For its part, the US remains the largest single source of foreign direct investment in South Africa.

South Africa’s diplomacy in Asia and the Middle East would focus on cooperation pursued with partners through high-level visits, structured bilateral mechanisms and economic diplomacy initiatives. Focus would also be on the promotion of South Africa as an investment destination for investors from the region. Focus would be on value-added sector and beneficiation in support of South Africa’s industrialisation and development.

The Indian Ocean region remained of vital importance and growing geostrategic significance. South Africa was reported as viewing the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) as a pre-eminent regional organisation linking Africa, the Middle East and Asia via the Indian Ocean. The association is growing in stature and prominence, and South Africa is the Chair of IORA for the period from October 2017 to October 2019.

However, the Department has underscored that socio-economic development, regional or international, would be realised in a democratic environment which responds to the needs of the people. The conduct of bilateral political and economic relations would remain the center of the Department’s international work. This would be with a deliberate view to address domestic challenges and pursue continental aspirations.

As a result, this Annual plan commits South African missions abroad to work tirelessly and undertake practical steps to attract foreign direct investment and attract tourists from the South and the North alike. It further provided details of how the Department sought to project South Africa and improve comprehension of the country’s international engagements by both domestic and international audiences.

With regard to the relations with the anchor states and formations of the South, the Department recognises that South Africa shares a history of solidarity and current developmental challenges with most African countries and the global South. South-South cooperation remains critical in advancing common aspirations. The historic partnership has been entrenched with the establishment of the India, Brazil, and South Africa (IBSA) and the Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS). South Africa’s membership in BRICS has yielded benefits for the country and is expected to do so for the rest of the continent.

The New Development Bank (NDB) was launched in 2015, while the African Regional Center (the ARC) of the NDB was launched in 2017 by former President Jacob Zuma. The ARC is intended to play a catalytic role in providing financial and project preparation support for infrastructure and sustainable development projects in South Africa and Africa. South Africa assumed the rotational Chairship of BRICS from 1 January to 31 December 2018, succeeding the People’s Republic of China. President Cyril Ramaphosa would host the 10th BRICS Summit in Johannesburg from 25 to 27 July 2018. This would be another opportunity for South Africa to place the developmental needs of the continent higher on the agenda.

On the Global Agenda, the Department’s focus would continue to be on the reform of the United Nations (UN) system. The Department is conscious that the UN, in its current form, is not reflective of the current global political and economic configuration. Its current form, the UN system (especially the UN Security Council) is regarded as undemocratic and unrepresentative of the aspirations of its membership, particularly the poor and the marginalised.

The Department further urges that the 2015 Paris Agreement be implemented without delay to protect human life from the on-going erratic and persistent weather conditions. The Department would also continue to represent the national interest of South Africa and the aspirations of the African continent and the global South in its participation in the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and the Group of 20 (G20).

The Portfolio Committee had recommended, in its 2014/15, 2015/16 and 2016/17 Budget Review and Recommendation Reports, that the Department should ensure that crafting of foreign policy and its diplomatic projections are handled by cognisant, professional and technically proficient officials at home and in missions abroad.

In response, the Department revised its organisational structure in 2016, to realign it with the ever-changing mandate of international relations trends.

However, the new structure is not fully operational. In the light of the increasing demand being placed on the national fiscus and the drive to curtail the public sector wage bill, the Department has to operate within a set ceiling of compensation of employees. This has severely impacted on the filling of vacancies and the Department would accordingly continue to abolish/freeze non-critical posts, both at headquarters and abroad. The Department has reported a current vacancy rate at 9,09%, which is within the national minimum average rate of 10%.

**7.2 Overview of Departmental budget 2018/19 and MTEF expenditure focus**

The Department would be allocated an increased budget amount of R6 552 768 billion in 2018/19, compared to R6 408 339 billion in 2017/18 financial year. The budget could still be affected by foreign exchange fluctuations later in the year, or by unplanned activities that the Department could find itself faced with in the execution of its mandate. The impact on the overall budget could be further exacerbated since the Department would be hosting a number of high level events in the 2018/19 financial year. This was reported in line with South Africa having assumed strategic leadership positions in international forums and being: Chair of SADC August 2017-August 2018; Chair of BRICS: January 2018-December 2018; Chair of IORA: October 2017-October 2019; Chair of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC): July 2015 to date; currently serving in the AU Peace and Security Council and bidding for non-permanent seat in the UN Security Council for 2019 and 2020. There would be summits and structured meetings which South Africa has to host, and National Treasury has asked the Department to find a budget for the events within the allocated budget.

* 1. **Strengthening the African Agenda and regional integration**

Over the medium term, the Department would be involved in rationalising regional economic communities towards a continental free trade area. It would be revitalizing the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) on infrastructure development, and promoting good governance systems through the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). These and other related activities are budgeted for in the Africa subprogramme of the International Relations programme and the Continental Cooperation subprogramme in the International Cooperation programme. An amount of R10,3 million is allocated to the International Cooperation programme over the medium term period to carry out these activities[[5]](#footnote-5).

With the aim of partnering with the private sector to develop industry and value chains in the SADC, South Africa assumed the rolling one-year chairpersonship of the SADC. To facilitate this position, R23 million has been allocated for the following ministerial meetings: the ministerial meeting of labour and social partners (May 2018); the ministerial meeting of agriculture, food and security (May 2018); the joint ministerial meeting of education, science and technology (June 2018); the ministerial meeting on youth (July 2018); and the ministerial meeting of justice and attorneys general (July 2018).[[6]](#footnote-6)

Over the medium term, the Department would continue making contributions towards operationalising the tripartite agreement between South Africa, Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The agreement is in support of the peace and security framework agreement for the Great Lakes region. South Africa would continue to support the African Union (AU) Peace Fund and other efforts of the AU Peace and Security Council in pursuit of lasting peace on the continent. South Africa’s contributions to the AU for membership were expected to increase at an average annual rate of 7,9%, from R200,1 million in 2017/18 to R251 million in 2020/21. The increase would be mainly due to inflationary budget adjustments and revised membership contributions. Funds for this purpose are allocated to the International Transfers programme.[[7]](#footnote-7)

**7.4 Consolidating global economic, political and social relations**

The Department would strengthen and consolidate South-South relations. It would be reflecting the shift in the balance of the global distribution of power and increasing influence of emerging economies in the multilateral trading system. Over the medium term, the Department would continue to utilise its membership and engagements with groupings of the South, such as the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), the Group of 77 (G77), and the People’s Republic of China; the Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS), to advance South Africa’s foreign policy objectives. The adoption of the strategy for BRICS economic partnership is expected to facilitate trade and investment, enhance market access opportunities and facilitate market inter-linkages between the countries. The BRICS’ New Development Bank, serves as an instrument for financing infrastructure investment and sustainable development projects in the BRICS and other countries and emerging market economies. South Africa would continue its support to the India, Brazil, and South Africa (IBSA) forum.

In 2017/18, the Department developed a strategy for chairing BRICS in 2018, and planned to spend R27 million in 2018/19 in the Asia and Middle East subprogramme in the International Relations programme to host the BRICS summit in 2018. As the chair of BRICS, South Africa intended to place the AU’s Agenda 2063 on the BRICS agenda.[[8]](#footnote-8)

Also in the Asia and Middle East subprogramme, the Department expects to spend R15 million in 2018/19 on chairing the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), and R13 million on hosting the IORA summit. Membership to the IORA has provided a strategic platform through which South Africa has been able to pursue and realise domestic, regional and international policy priorities and objectives. The Department has also allocated R1 million over the medium term to the International Transfers programme for spending on the IORA’s research centre.[[9]](#footnote-9)

Over the medium term, the Department has planned to establish and manage bilateral structures and mechanisms. It would also coordinate high-level engagements on issues such as trade, investment, peace, security and cultural exchange.

This would strengthen South Africa’s political and economic partnerships. It could also increase exports of the country’s goods and services. It could attract greater foreign direct investment and technology transfers into value adding industries and mineral beneficiation, and grow inbound tourism and the skills base. The 124 foreign missions play a crucial role in these activities, as do bilateral meetings with targeted government ministries, meetings with potential investors, engagements with various chambers of commerce, and participation in events to promote tourism.

In 2018/19, the Department is expected to undertake 238 economic diplomacy initiatives on trade and investment, as well as engagements with chambers of commerce. The Department has also planned to enhance South Africa’s existing 175 bilateral relations, which were characterised by strong political and economic partnerships with the potential to contribute significantly to its economic growth imperatives. Spending on these activities is in the International Cooperation programme, and is expected to increase at an average annual rate of 7,8%, from R490,1 million in 2017/18 to R613,8 million in 2020/21.[[10]](#footnote-10)

To advance South Africa’s foreign policy objectives, the Department would continue to strengthen and consolidate South-South relations through its membership and engagements with organisations such as the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, G77 and the Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa (BRICS) group of countries. The adoption of the strategy for the BRICS economic partnership is expected to facilitate trade and investment, enhance access to market opportunities, and facilitate trade between member countries. The BRICS New Development Bank (the NDB) was officially launched in February 2015. The bank is operational and it lends money to developing countries and emerging economies to help finance infrastructure and sustainable projects. The bank’s Africa Regional Centre was launched in Johannesburg in 2017 and has begun operations. The Department would continue to support, negotiate and influence reforms in systems and structures of global governance through its ongoing participation in United Nations (UN) structures, and multilateral organisations and forums. These activities are funded through the *Membership Contribution* subprogramme in the *International Transfers* programme.

* 1. **Enhancing the Department’s operational capacity**

The Department operates in a global environment, under conditions that were often significantly different from those defined by the policy context for the public service in South Africa. To address these differences, the Department has reviewed the legislative framework governing its operations. The Foreign Service Bill is currently before Parliament and expected to be finalised over the medium term. The Department is also responsible for capacitating government officials in administrative and diplomatic skills through the diplomatic training academy. Spending on these activities is in the Diplomatic Training, Research and Development subprogramme in the Administration programme, are expected to increase at an average annual rate of 11,6%, from R64,9 million in 2017/18 to R90,2 million in 2020/21.

* 1. **Developing and managing infrastructure projects and properties**

The Department manages a portfolio of domestic and international properties. Expenditures incurred in the domestic portfolio include: unitary payments for the public-private partnership for the head office building; rental and maintenance costs for three state protocol lounges at the OR Tambo, Cape Town and King Shaka international airports; the costs of two diplomatic guesthouses; and the accommodation costs of United Nations agencies, the Pan African Parliament and the NEPAD secretariat. In addition, the Department manages a portfolio of state-owned and rented properties abroad, and is responsible for leasing, purchasing, disposals, alterations, maintenance, refurbishment, furniture and facilities.

The Department’s new property management strategy was approved in August 2017 to provide for a mixture of rental and ownership. To reduce the cost of rental properties, the Department was in the process of drafting a plan to own properties in missions for office and residential accommodation. Accordingly, and for piloting purposes, the Department was in the process of purchasing a property in New York to house the country’s mission office and residence in the United States. In line with the approved strategy, similar acquisitions and development projects would be planned and undertaken in Luanda, Angola; Juba, Republic of South Sudan; Geneva, Switzerland; New Delhi, India; Beijing, China; Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; and Kigali, Rwanda.[[11]](#footnote-11)

It is expected that R2,2 billion would be spent over the medium term in the International Relations programme. This would be on lease commitments for chanceries, official residences and staff accommodation for the Department’s staff, as well as staff from the Department of Home Affairs.[[12]](#footnote-12)

The Department’s international property portfolio consists of approximately 127 state owned properties and in excess of 1000 rented properties. Presently, the Department spends about R575 million per year on leases in countries where it does not own properties. The Department has developed a property acquisition strategy for the accelerated acquisition of state-owned accommodation via alternative funding mechanisms such as finance lease arrangements.

In accordance with this strategy, property acquisition and developments would in the medium term, focus on the development of state-owned vacant land according to developmental standards and norms. Focus would also be on acquisition of property in areas of strategic and economic importance, such as multilateral areas and BRICS trading partners. Property renovations, repair and maintenance activities have been planned to be executed in accordance with the comprehensive property conditions assessment of all state-owned properties. Day-to-day property maintenance continues to be executed by missions and monitored by Head Office with specific key performance areas at both levels.

All state owned properties are maintained annually from operational funds allocated to individual missions. At present, the Government owns 25 chanceries, one consulate, 35 official residences, 66 staff houses, 14 plots of vacant land and one parking bay[[13]](#footnote-13).

* 1. **Public Private Partnerships (PPPs)**

The headquarters of the Department and guesthouses were constructed under a PPPs arrangement. The same facilities management company maintained the properties on behalf of the Department. The Department has to pay a unitary fee for the services, amounting to R249 932 987 million per annum for the head office and guest houses. The PPPs agreement would continue until September 2034.

1. **Expenditure trends for Departmental programmes**

**8.1 Table 1 Budget Allocation-Vote 6: International Relations and Cooperation**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Programme** | **Nominal Rand change** | | **Real Rand change** | | **Nominal % change** | | **Real % change** | |
|  |  | |  | |  | |  | |
| R million | **2017/18** | **2018/19** | | **2019/20** | | **2017/18-2018/19** | | | | **2017/18-2018/19** | |
| 1: Administration | 1 556 6 | 1 665 6 | | 1 711 3 | | 108,8 | | 22,0 | | 6,99 | 1,41 |
| 2: International Relations | 3 470 3 | 3 359 4 | | 3 044 3 | | - 110,9 | | - 286,0 | | -3,20 | -8,24 |
| 3: International Cooperation | 489,9 | 568,3 | | 574,4 | | 78,4 | | 48,8 | | 16,00 | 9,96 |
| 4: Public Diplomacy& Protocol | 282,7 | 302,1 | | 322,9 | | 19,4 | | 3,7 | | 6,86 | 1,29 |
| 5: International Transfers | 608,6 | 657,4 | | 655,6 | | 48,8 | | 14,5 | | 8,02 | 2,39 |
| Total | **6 408 3** | **6 552 8** | | 6 308 5 | | **144,5** | | **- 197,1** | | **2,25** | **-3,08** |

Source: 2018 Estimates of National Expenditure

Table 1 illustrates the medium term expenditure estimates for each programme for the years 2017/18 and 2018/19, and describes the changes in allocations from the years 2017/18 and 2019/20. From this the following can be concluded. For programme 1: Administration, the 2018/19 allocation increases by 6,99% and the real change is 1,41%. Programme 2: International Relations allocation for 2018/19 declines by 3,20% or in real terms by 9,96%. Programme 3: International Cooperation, had an increase of 16% in nominal terms and a real change of 9,96%. Programme 4: Public Diplomacy and Protocol Services experiences an increase in allocation of 6,86% and a real change of 1,29%. Finally, Programme 5: International Transfers experiences an increase in allocation of 8,02% in nominal terms and a real change of 2,39%.

Overall, the budget allocation for the Department increases by R144, 5 million in nominal terms and decreases by R197,7 million in real terms in 2018/19 from the previous financial year.

* 1. **Expenditure per programme**
     1. **Programme 1: Administration**

The purpose of this programme is to develop the overall policy of the Department and manage its operations. The Strategic Objective of this programme is to achieve an efficient, effective, economical and fully capacitated Department.

There has been an increase in expenditure in Programme 1 from R1  556,6 billion in 2017/18, to R1 665,6 in 2018/19[[14]](#footnote-14).

* + 1. **Programme 2: International Relations**

The purpose of this programme is to promote relations with foreign countries.

**Subprogrammes**

* **Africa** embraces relevant national priorities by strengthening bilateral cooperation with individual countries in Africa, particularly through focusing on increasing exports of South African goods and services, foreign direct investment with technology transfers into value added industries and mineral beneficiation, and inbound tourism and skills enhancement.
* **Asia and Middle East** embraces relevant national priorities by strengthening bilateral cooperation with individual countries in Asia and the Middle East, particularly through focusing on increasing exports of South African goods and services, foreign direct investment with technology transfers into value added industries and mineral beneficiation, and inbound tourism and skills enhancement.
* **Americas and Caribbean** embraces relevant national priorities by strengthening bilateral cooperation with individual countries in the Americas and the Caribbean, particularly through focusing on increasing exports of South African goods and services, foreign direct investment with technology transfers into value added industries and mineral beneficiation, and inbound tourism and skills enhancement.
* **Europe** embraces relevant national priorities by strengthening bilateral cooperation with individual countries in Europe, particularly through focusing on increasing exports of South African goods and services, foreign direct investment with technology transfers into value added industries and mineral beneficiation, and inbound tourism and skills enhancement.

There has been a reduction in Programme 2 from R3 470,3 billion in 2017/18, to R3 359,4 billion in 2018/19[[15]](#footnote-15).

* + 1. **Programme 3: International Cooperation**

Purpose - Participate in international organisations and institutions in line with South Africa’s national values and foreign policy objectives.

**Objectives**

* Contribute towards a reformed, strengthened and, multilateral system that is based on equal rules and that will be responsive to the needs of developing countries and Africa, in particular, by participating in the global system of governance on an ongoing basis.
* Strengthen the African Union (AU) by:
  + providing ongoing financial support for the operations of the Pan African Parliament in terms of the country host agreement.
* Improving governance and capacity in the SADC secretariat on an ongoing basis by implementing the secretariat’s job evaluation plan and assisting with the recruitment process on an ongoing basis.
* Contributing towards the New Partnership for Africa’s Development process for socioeconomic development in Africa by participating in the African Peer Review Mechanism and submitting the African Peer Review Mechanism country report when required.
* Strengthening bilateral, trilateral and multilateral interest and relations within the Brazil-Russia-India-China South Africa group of countries dialogue forum through continuous active participation in forum structures.
* Strengthening political solidarity, economic cooperation and socio-cultural relations with Asian countries by participating in the New Asian-African Strategic Partnership structures over the medium term.

**Subprogrammes**

* **Global System of Governance** provides for multilateralism and a rules based international order. This entails participating and playing an active role in all forums of the UN system and its specialised agencies, and funding programmes that promote the principles of multilateral activity.
* **Continental Cooperation** provides for the enhancement of the African Agenda and sustainable development.
* **South-South Cooperation** provides for partnerships with countries of the South in advancing South Africa’s own development needs and the needs of the African Agenda; and creates political, economic and social convergence for the fight against poverty, underdevelopment and the marginalisation of the South.
* **South-North Dialogue** provides for South Africa’s bilateral and multilateral engagements to consolidate and strengthen relations with organisations of the North to advance and support national priorities, the African Agenda and the developmental agenda of the South.

There has been an increase in expenditure for Programme 3 from R490,1 million in 2017/18 to R568,3 million in 2018/19[[16]](#footnote-16).

* + 1. **Programme 4: Public Diplomacy and Protocol Services**

Purpose - Communicate South Africa’s role and position in international relations in the domestic and international arenas, and provide protocol services.

**Subprogrammes**

* **Public Diplomacy** promotes a positive projection of South Africa’s image; communicates foreign policy positions to both domestic and foreign audiences; and markets and brands South Africa by using public diplomacy platforms, strategies, products and services.
* **Protocol Services** facilitates incoming and outgoing high level visits and ceremonial events, coordinates and regulates engagement with the local diplomatic community, provides protocol advice and support to the various spheres of government, facilitates the hosting of international conferences in South Africa, and manages state protocol lounges and guesthouses.

There has been an increase in Programme 4 from R282,7 million in 2017/18 to R302,1 million in 2018/19[[17]](#footnote-17).

* + 1. **Programme 5: International Transfers**

Purpose - Fund membership fees and transfers to international organisations such as the UN, AU, and SADC.

**Subprogrammes**

* **Departmental Agencies** facilitates the transfer to the African Renaissance and International Cooperation Fund, a public entity of the department.
* **Membership Contribution** facilitates transfers to international organisations.

According to the ENE the spending focus for Programme 5 over the medium term will be on making transfers to the public entity and timeous payment of South Africa’s membership fees to international organisations.

The Department would anticipate an increase in expenditure in Programme 5 from R608,6 million in 2017/18, to R657,4 million in 2018/19[[18]](#footnote-18). This allocation is impacted upon by currency fluctuations.

1. **African Renaissance and International Cooperation Fund**

The Department has one entity, the African Renaissance and International Cooperation Fund (ARF). After 1994, the democratic government took a deliberate decision to establish a fund, to promote development assistance and consolidate peace and reconstruction in Africa and elsewhere in the world. The fund was thus established in 2000 pursuant to an Act of Parliament, the African Renaissance and International Cooperation Fund Act (Act no. 51 of 2000).

The fund was piloted to give practical effect to the vision of an African Renaissance, being the revival of economic and social development agenda for Africa. This would include promotion of democracy and good governance, the prevention and resolution of conflicts, socioeconomic development and integration, human resource development and infrastructure development. Countries in need of assistance apply for funding from the fund. Since 2006. Thus, the strategic approach of the ARF was couched in pursuance of South Africa’s foreign policy objectives as well as Africa’s developmental agenda.

The ARF is located in the Department, under the supervision of the Director-General. The ARF’s activities were administered and managed by its advisory committee, which would comprise representatives from the Department and National Treasury. This committee would make recommendations to the two ministers for concurrence to fund all its projects. Much as the ARF has been allocated personnel, it has been completely supported and administered by the Department. Transfers to the Fund were included in the monies appropriated to the Department. Countries in need of assistance apply for funding from the fund.

On 2 December 2009, Cabinet approved the proposal from the Department for the establishment of the South African Development Partnership Agency (SADPA). Its aim is to function as a body/agency to manage, coordinate and facilitate all South African official outgoing development cooperation programmes and projects. The legislative process for establishing the agency was under way, with the Partnership Fund for Development Bill would be tabled before Parliament. Once enacted, the Bill would repeal the African Renaissance and International Cooperation Fund Act (2000), resulting in the integration of functions and the transfer of reserves and assets from the fund to the agency.

The Department was in the process of finalising institutional arrangements with National Treasury. Once these were finalised, the draft bill would be submitted to Cabinet for approval to Gazette for public comment.

* 1. **African Renaissance Fund medium-term targets**

There are new performance areas introduced under the ARF. These are important elements needed for ensuring that the entity performs as expected.

1. Approved projects would be monitored for compliance and to ensure that funds are utilised for purposes for which they were disbursed.
2. A project Oversight Committee would be in place to monitor active projects and produce quarterly reports on the findings on the active projects.
3. There would also be quarterly close out reports on completed or closed projects.

Also as part of the decision to lower the national aggregate expenditure ceiling, the 2018/19 appropriated funds for the ARF is R38 692 million. The ARF had requested R39 683 million, therefore there has been a reduction of R991 thousand. For the 2018/19, the ARF has an accumulated surplus of R752 036 million, and therefore it has R790 728 million to work with this financial year[[19]](#footnote-19). It is important to note that the ARF continues to be a significant instrument in the implementation of South Africa’s foreign policy imperatives, especially for development cooperation in Africa. However, The ARF was requested by National Treasury, to surrender to the national revenue fund R1,6 billion in the 2017/18 financial year. This was despite the provisions of section 7(2) of the ARF Act of 2000 no 51 providing that “any unexpended balance in the Fund at the close of any financial year must be carried forward as a credit in the Fund to the next succeeding financial year”.

One of the objectives of the ARF is to promote democracy and good governance. The ARF would continue to support the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) election observer missions. The holding of democratic elections is considered critical to socio-economic development on the continent. There are three elections that will take place in SADC (Zimbabwe, Madagascar and Democratic Republic of Congo) this financial year. The Department believes that building strong institutions would enable South Africa to entrench the culture of good governance as well as efficiency and responsiveness, which, is an integral part of Africa’s renewal programme.

The ARF would continue to pursue its strategic objectives as outlined in the ARF Act, with more emphasis on provision of loans and investment projects to fulfil these strategic objectives. Loans or other financial assistance are granted in accordance with an agreement entered into by the country in question and the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation (hereafter referred to as the Minister). The ARF has granted its first loan to the Government of Cuba, this was line with the ARF future strategy of focusing on loans and infrastructure investment, which would aid in recapitalising the ARF amid reduced allocations. Socio-economic development could be achieved by funding sustainable projects through the provision of loans.

The world continues to experience an increase in natural disasters. This fund enables South Africa to be counted among those who strive to restore human dignity and bring relief to people in distress as and when humanitarian situations arise.

Trilateral cooperation would be an area of focus in the medium term period. The ARF would work with other funding institutions to ensure greater impact of the projects that are funded. During South Africa’s chairpersonship of BRICS, the ARF would host other development agencies of BRICS countries to share experiences and consider how development agencies could partner with development banks for greater impact.

1. **Observations and concerns raised by the Committee (Findings)**

10.1 The Committee noted the undertaking by the Department that they would endeavour to achieve their set annual objectives within the allocated tight budget. However, more details were sought on the impact of not having an extra budget for international obligations facing South Africa, since assuming leadership roles in a number of organisations for the 2018-2019 financial year.

10.2 There were challenges facing the Department which would impact on its overall budget. A detailed explanation was sought on how the Department would contain expenditure within the reduced compensation of employees as these were largely paid in foreign currency. The Committee further noted that the Department was also facing scenarios of unexpected expenditure due to its international obligations this financial year; such as hosting the BRICS Summit. More details were sought on how the Department would implement its international obligations with no additional funds allocated from National Treasury for these events.

10.3 Two cost- drivers impacting on the budget of the Department were identified. These were the budget ceiling on the compensation of employees and the fluctuation of major currencies affecting the Rand. Mitigating factors put in place with regard to employees were the laying-off of some Locally Recruited Personnel (LRPs), and deferment of filling some posts of transferred personnel. The Department was commended for steadily reducing the number of Locally Recruited Personnel in South African missions abroad. It was further proposed that the rationalisation of South African missions abroad should be considered in the future to address this challenge.

10.4 A need was identified for regular political engagements and discussions between the Minister and the Committee on various international affairs issues. This would enable the Committee, as the public’s representatives, to understand the politics behind certain positions that South Africa has to take in multilateral forums. This would further address perceptions that South Africa is slowly diminishing in political circles, especially in Africa.

10.5 More information was sought on the reasons why there would be a differentiated kind of support that South Africa would be extending to three countries which would be holding elections in 2018. These are namely, Zimbabwe, Madagascar, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

10.6 The Department has conducted a feasibility study on the viability of developing an acquisition and disposal strategy. This is aimed to promote a shift towards property ownership over rental. More detail was sought on the result of such a study and progress related to its initial application in the mission in New York.

10.7 It was noted that South Africa was campaigning for a non-permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council for 2018-2020. More information was sought on whether South Africa would get support from Africa on its bid for the non-permanent seat. It was further asked whether the aspirations of the Ezulwini Consensus, for Africa to be represented in the United Nations Security Council, were being actively pursued.

10.8 It was observed that there is still low intra-Africa trade. More details were sought regarding how the existence of an African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) would address this challenge. A further explanation was sought on why South Africa did not sign the AfCFTA agreement in Rwanda in March 2018.

10.9 Cuba was commended for having paid back, ahead of time, a large percentage of its current loan with the South African government. The gesture was seen as a true reflection of solidarity and cooperation under the auspices of the South-South relations. It was further noted that the ARF is now looking into issuing investment loans in the future, such as the one with Cuba.

10.10 More details were sought regarding the impact on the activities of the ARF, by the recalling of R1,6 billion by National Treasury from its 2017/18 surplus funds. This was seen as threatening to limit the historical mandate of the ARF as a ‘soft power tool’ to leverage aspirations of South Africa’s Foreign Policy.

10.11 More information was sought on when SADPA would be operationalised to address all the challenges facing the ARF. It was further noted that the Department has since paid back the monies (R204 million) owed the ARF

10.12 More information was needed on the political and rand value of South Africa’s membership to international organisations.

10.13 A detailed report was requested on the achievements in furtherance of the tenets of South Africa’s Foreign Policy during South Africa’s tenure in leadership positions of the various international organisations during the reporting period.

10.14 More information was sought regarding disciplinary cases which were still pending finalisation, especially the one concerning the Chief Financial Officer.

10.15 There was a need for more detail on the Department’s roadmap to increase intra-Africa trade. This should extend to how it intended to respond to the need to attract FDI required for Operation Phakisa and the President’s drive to create job opportunities.

10.16 More information was needed on whether there was any relationship between the mandate of the President’s four special investment envoys and the Department’s economic diplomacy drive.

10.17 There was a need for further clarity on why the Department would have an annual target of only 10 programmes for youth and people with disability.

10.18 More information was requested on South Africa’s posture for keeping the reform of the United Nations Security Council alive on the agenda of the UN.

10.19 An update was sought regarding steps taken thus far to address the shortcomings identified in the Auditor General’s Report 2017. Special focus was on the matters relating to the upgrading and integration of the departmental ICT systems.

1. **Responses by the Department**

In its responses the Department noted the following.

11.1 The pressures imposed on the overall allocated budget would have an impact on the operations of the Department, however the Department would still be able to achieve its objectives.

11.2 The Department has already put cost-containment measures in place in order to source funds for the extra-budgetary international obligations facing it this financial year. Through laying-off of some LRPs, the Department would be able to get R60 million for the BRICS summit and R13 million for hosting the IORA summit. However, it would not be easy without the extra budgetary allocation from National Treasury.

11.3 With regard to rationalisation of South African missions abroad, time and space should be given for the new Minister and the President to study the situation and take appropriate decisions on the matter.

11.4 The idea of regular political discourse between the Minister and the Committee was welcomed. Such political discussions would help shape the next round of strategic planning content, hence allowing the Committee to influence the areas of work the Department would focus on.

11.5 Madagascar and the Democratic Republic of Congo requested technical assistance for holding of elections later this year. Zimbabwe has not requested any such assistance, and therefore South Africa would only participate in election observing in Zimbabwe under the auspices of SADC Election Observer Mission (SEOM).

11.6 The new property management strategy was approved in August 2017 to provide for a mixture of rental and ownership. For piloting purposes, the Department is in the process of purchasing a property in New York to house the country’s mission office and residence in the United States, and other areas would follow.

11.7 South Africa fully supported the aspirations of the Ezulwini Consensus, in that Africa should have a representation in the UN Security Council. Currently South Africa was campaigning for a non-permanent seat in the UN Security Council, and the lobbying process has been intensive giving hope for a successful bid.

11.8 The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) sought to address the low intra-Africa trade. South Africa signed a Declaration launching the AfCFTA. Currently, consultations are well underway between relevant stakeholders to address issues of concern before a ratification process could begin. Parliament would be involved at the ratification stage.

11.9 Due to the unilateral US economic embargo on Cuba, the loan granted by the government to Cuba could not be transferred through normal bank transactions. The ARF had to step in and effect the transactions under the Economic Assistance Package agreement between South Africa and Cuba. The Cuban government has been diligently repaying the loan ahead of the stipulated time.

11.10 Section 7(2) of the ARF Act no.51 of 2000, provides that any unexpended balance in the Fund at the close of any financial year must be carried forward as a credit in the Fund for the next financial year. However, the National Treasury requested the ARF to surrender the surplus of R1.6 billion in 2017/18. The concern has been that if the accumulated revenue continue to be surrendered, the ARF would reach a point where it would have limited capacity to finance causes in pursuit of national interest.

11.11 There were still challenges relating to governance which needed to be addressed with National Treasury in order to finalise the migration from the ARF to SADPA. It is hoped that the Bill aimed at effecting the migration would be tabled before Parliament in 2018/19.

11.12 A detailed report on South Africa’s membership and related information would be availed to the Committee within a week.

11.13 A detailed report is being compiled on the achievements and processes on South Africa’s Chairship in different international organisations. It would be availed to the Committee for its consideration.

11.14 The allegations against the Chief Financial Officer have been investigated, and all other pending disciplinary matters were receiving attention. A full report would be availed to the Committee during the 2nd quarter performance reporting process.

11.15 There was no official involvement of the Department in the mandate and activities of the four special investment envoys as appointed by the President.

11.16 There has been an on-going programme (s) for the youth and people with disability. The Department has had several opportunities aimed at opening up opportunities for the vulnerable groups within the Department.

11.17 The Department has maintained focus on the issue of the reform of the United Nations systems, especially the structural reform of the UN Security Council. This agenda would be further pursued when assuming the non-permanent seat in the UN Security Council.

11.18 South Africa is among five countries expected to pay 15% of the African Union operational budget. There is also the Peace Fund to pay for annually. These obligations are in line with South Africa’s Foreign Policy principles of pursuing a continent that is self-sufficient and able to apply African solutions to African problems.

1. **Conclusions**

After discussions during the briefing, the Committee concluded as follows:

The Department has been operating on a very tight budget year after year. This year however, it has received a budget increase which is already facing a number of hurdles to overcome. The budget would still further be affected by the imminent foreign exchange currency fluctuations and unavoidable mandates and responsibilities in its diplomatic intercourse and conduct of international relations. Its main operations abroad have previously been affected by currency fluctuations.

However, the Committee was encouraged by the Department’s commitment and resolve to achieve its strategic objectives albeit with a tight budget. Graduation from the unqualified audit opinion baseline to a clean audit should be the Department’s goal for the medium term; and it should adhere to and implement the cost containment measures it has agreed to with the National Treasury.

The Department has to carry out its mandate within unpredictable, at times turbulent, external environment to advance South Africa’s national interest. The National Development Plan prescribed that the Department should position itself to assume greater leadership role in Africa, leading development and growth in the continent. The interplay between foreign policy and national interest continue to be the baseline for the Department’s success in the conduct South Africa’s foreign policy. Following from the above conclusions, it has, therefore, become important for the Department to have continued clear and focus driven plans which remain aligned to the budget allocated, and the continued vigour to respond to the domestic challenges as per the aspirations of the NDP.

The Committee has a proud tradition of engagement in South Africa’s foreign policy. It continues to address various issues aimed at enhancing the conduct of South Africa’s foreign policy. It has engaged in issues from human rights, engagement with civil society, para-diplomacy, assisting in shaping conduct of foreign policy in the region, Africa and the world, to economic diplomacy, among other important issues.

The Committee has made a number of recommendations to the Department, as part of its oversight, and in an effort to enhance the way South Africa relates and engages in international relations. The Department has, over the years, responded positively and walked this road benefitting from guidance from the Committee.

The Committee has received the Foreign Service Bill and is fully engaged on public hearings with a variety of stakeholders on the Bill. The Committee undertook a study tour to Canada in September 2017. The study tour would enhance its contribution on the Bill and introduce best practices on the management of a Foreign Service system. The Committee has planned to finalise the Bill in 2018.

The Committee, therefore, is at the stage where it would monitor compliance with and implementation of the strategies and turnaround strategies put in place by the Department. It would look into emerging trends in the conduct of South Africa’s foreign policy for the Committee to make its political input. The Committee’s future areas of focus should be in regard to the issues raised as risks in the Revised Strategic Plan 2015-2020.

1. **The Committee’s recommendations**

Having considered the Strategic plan and the Budget Vote of the Department and its entity, the Committee recommends that the Minister should consider the following and report on progress within three months of adoption by the National Assembly of this report:

* 1. Reporting on how the Department will reprioritise its work in order to find adequate resources for financing activities to be borne from South Africa’s international obligations as the chair of a number of multilateral organisations in 2018/19.
  2. Reporting on the complimentary role of the Department in support of the work of the former Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Aziz Pahad, as South Africa’s envoy soliciting support for South Africa’s candidature for a non-permanent seat in the UN Security Council.
  3. Having regular political engagements and discussions with the Committee on international issues that impact upon South Africa’s Foreign Policy.
  4. Finalising processes and inter-departmental negotiations towards the operationalisation of the South African Development and Partnership Agency (SADPA).
  5. Reporting on progress towards the upgrading and integration of the departmental ICT systems.

13.6 Filling of quotas allocated in international organisations to which South Africa is a member, and focus on middle management levels.

13.7 Finalising the pending negotiations and addressing outstanding issues on both the Tripartite Free Trade Area (TFTA) and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), in order for South Africa to sign and consider ratifying both the Agreements establishing the TFTA and the AfCFTA.

13.8 Concretising the implementation of the pilot project to acquire property abroad for the utilisation by missions abroad via alternative funding, in order to curb costs of leasing properties abroad.

13.9 Finalising pending disciplinary cases, especially the matter regarding the Chief Financial Officer.

13.10 Assessing and reporting on how the recall of the surplus monies from the African Renaissance Fund would impact on its mandate as a ‘soft power tool’ for South Africa’s Foreign Policy.

13.11 Devising a long term approach to downsizing the number of the Locally Recruited Personnel in the missions abroad.

13.12 Graduating from the unqualified audit opinion with findings to a clean audit report in 2018/19 financial year.

The Committee recommends that Budget Vote: 6 International Relations and Cooperation be passed.

Report to be considered.

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