**Report of the Portfolio Committee on International Relations and Cooperation on Budget Vote 6: International Relations and Cooperation, dated29 May2020**

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 Committeeheld a virtual meeting due to the restricted movement amid the Covid-19 pandemic. The Committee had a preparatory session earlier on 21 May 2020, where the Committee Content Adviser highlighted salient sector issues and the budget allocations of the Department for 2020/21. The Committee met later on 21 May 2020for the Department’s presentation on itsStrategic Plan 2020-2025 and its Annual Performance Plan (APP) 2020/21. The Committee further discussed the Strategic Plan 2020-2025 of the African Renaissance and International Cooperation Fund (ARF) and its Annual Performance Plan 2020/21, together with the Department’s overall budget allocation for 2020/21.

* 1. **Opening remarks by the Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee of International Relations and Cooperation, Honourable Ms TandiMahambehlala**

In her opening remarks, Honourable Mahambehlala welcomed all the attendees. She further reminded the members that the Committee was in a virtual meeting because of the Covid-19 pandemic and all its related circumstances.

However, the Chairperson hastened to focus on the business of the day. She saw the meeting as very significant for the Portfolio Committee, asit marked the beginning of building the Committee’s own Legacy in its oversight mandate over the Department. She noted that the Committee had been dealing with the backlog of issues from the 5th Parliament, and that the Committeewas at the start of the next 5 years of robust oversight over a new mandate provided by the government through the Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) 2019-2024. The Department is responsible for Priority 7 of the MTSF, ‘A Better Africa and a Better World’.

She emphasised that pursuant to its 2020-2025 Strategic Plan and 2020/21 Annual Performance Plan, the Department was expected to map its way forward and inform the Portfolio how it would drive Service Delivery on Priority 7. It should show how it would link domestic imperatives to its international work.

Ms Mahambehlala said the Committee was looking forward to deep discussions with the Department. These would show how the Department utilizedits global footprint (125 Missions abroad), and bilateral relations with many countries of the world for the improvement of the lives of South Africans.

The Chairperson observed that Africa remains central to South Africa’s Foreign Policy, and that the Committee appreciated the fact that President Ramaphosa is the current Chair of the African Union (AU). She further highlighted that during South Africa’s tenure, the Committee would like to see South Africa’s national interest playing itself through working towards a safe and secure Africa, a prosperous Africa, ‘the Africa We Want’. Conflict hot-spots in Africa would have to be addressed with urgency, such as in Libya, Somalia, the Sahel region, South Sudan, and the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

The Chairperson expressed a desire to witness the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area for a self-sufficient Africa, that would have a thriving inter-Africa trade. The importance of having progress towards regional economic integration with immediate neighbours in SADC was emphasised.

It was indicated that the Committee remained convinced that the Department should continue to place South Africa as a partner and global player. South Africa’s presence in the UN Security Council should continue to be used to promote the maintenance of international peace and security, peaceful settlement of disputes and the Reform of the UN Security Council.

Relations with the Global South should continue to address similar challenges, and remain strong and mutually beneficial. On the other hand, the historical relations with the North, should remain to yield results that would drive the development agenda of South Africa, Africa and the Global South.

The Chairperson pointed out that from the short encounter and interactions with the Department in the past MTSF, it became clear that the organizational structure of the Department was not aligned to its strategic goals. It was hoped this would be addressed.

Ms Mahambehlala observed that the Department’s Annual Performance Plan was being presented amid fiscal constraints, recurring qualified audit outcomes, outdated ICT systems, issues related to foreign exchange fluctuations, areas of ineffective financial management, supply chain contraventions especially in New York, shortfall on compensation of employees, discussions on reviewing South Africa’s global footprint (number of embassies), migration to the South African Development Partnership Agency (SADPA), headquarters for the Pan African Parliament, andthe COVID-19 era, to mention a few. It was hoped the strategic direction presented, would show a resolve to begin a new page, and start an era of service delivery of note in the Department.

The Chairperson pleaded with members of the Committee to focus on the business of the day, being the Budget Vote. A meeting would be arranged with the Department soon, for the Portfolio to iron out the outstanding matters and forge the way forward.

* 1. **Response by the Honourable Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Dr NalediPandor**

The Minister thanked the Chairperson for her succinct opening remarks which would help guide the work of the Department. In her overview, the Minister hastened to acknowledge that the COVID-19pandemic has brought about challenges in carrying out international work.The airline industry has been grounded and international intercourse in the form of travel and meetings have been impacted upon. The African Union (AU) summit of February 2020 had a fore warning of COVID-19, and in March it was declared. President Ramaphosa has maintained contact with the bureau of the African Union, and held virtual meetings with the AU Commission Chairperson to ensure that the AU achieves on its mandate.

The Hon Minister noted that the pandemic has caused particular challenges for the carrying on of the work of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation. She pointed out that many countries in the continent are in a state of lockdown. One of the sectors identified as hard hit was the airline industry which is essential for connecting the world through travel. However, there have been attempts by Ministers in the foreign relations sector to remain alert and ensure that there is continuation of collaboration and partnerships through virtual interaction. The country has lost significant international activity due to the pandemic.

President Cyril Ramaphosa, who is also the Chair of the African Union, has had to ensure that he maintains his role through regular contact with the Bureau of the African Union. This was in order to ensure the Bureau gives leadership to the continent as countries begin to respond to the pandemic. Already in March 2020, President Ramaphosa begun having meetings with the African Union Bureau, and worked closely with the African Union Commission Chairperson, to ensure that the continent does develop responses and practical action to address this pandemic.

President Ramaphosa has further proposed to other African leaders the need to create a COVID-19 Emergency Fund. The Fund is aimed to assist some countries in the continent which would not cope on their own resources to respond effectively to the threat of the disease. The Covid-19 fund has since been established to which several African countries have made donations including South Africa.

A call was also made to support the African Centre for Disease Control (CDC). This would assist to create a basis for the centre to be able to gather data, and to deploy staff to different countries on the continent that might need help at an expert level. A fund was also created to resource the Centre for Disease Control.

It was also noted that many other countries outside the African Union provided support. Personal Protective clothing (PPC) and other related equipment had since been received from China, United States, United Kingdom, and Germany to mention a few. It was noted that South Africa received the first shipment of donated 1000 ventilators from the United State of America, and Germany has promised similar support. South Africa also received a grant in aid through USAID from the United States, again to assist with relevant equipment and other needs.

It was pointed out that South Africa had been very active in the international community primarily through virtual means. South Africa has also been assisting with other issues of concern occurring on the continent. One such situation is around the security developments in Mozambique, where the attacks against the civilian population in Cabo Delgado has increased to a level that is extremely worrying. South Africa was in discussion with Mozambique on how South Africa may lend support. At this point it was understood that the attacks were launched by an insurgent group whose identity has not been publicly revealed.

This year there were several presidential elections expected throughout the continent. Burundi election had taken place and vote counting was underway. In July, Malawi would be going for election and Ethiopia was also scheduled for election in May 2020.

It was noted that the Minister would remain in contact with other Foreign Affairs Ministers in the world, to discuss multilateral matters and where necessary provide support to each other. It was further noted that several Foreign Affairs Ministers have been in constant contact with regards to matters of the repatriation of citizens. South Africa remained grateful to countries like the United Kingdom, Germany, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the United States, India, Brazil and many others, that have worked closely with the Department and the Nat-Joints in ensuring countries are able to repatriate their nationals.

South Africa has had to postpone the two extraordinary summits which were to be held at the end of May 2020. One was on the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area, and the other on the review of the African Union aspiration on ‘Silencing the Guns’ in order to map the way towards achieving that goal. An agreement was reached that these summits would be held later in the year when international travel is possible. South Africa was also looking into whether the early part of 2021 might be a possible time to plan for those summits.

1. **Briefing by the Department on Budget Vote 6: International Relations and Cooperation**
   1. **Presentation by the Department on its 2020/21 and Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) expenditure focus**

The Director General MrKgaboMahoai (the DG) gave a general overview of the mandate of the Department, being to work towards the realization of South Africa’s Foreign Policy objectives. This is done through:

* coordinating and aligning South Africa’s international relations,
* monitoring developments in the international environment,
* communicating government’s policy positions,
* developing and advising government on policy options, and creating mechanisms and avenues for achieving objectives,
* protecting South Africa’s sovereignty and territorial integrity,
* contributing to the creation of an enabling international environment for South African businesses,
* sourcing developmental assistance, and
* assisting South African citizens abroad[[1]](#footnote-2).

The Director General further mentioned that the departmental plans might be reviewed. They were developed at the end of 2019, on the assumption of things being normal before the pandemic hit South African shores.

1. **Strategic linkages to the National Development Plan (NDP) 2030**

It has been highlighted that South Africa’s Foreign Policy finds its inspiration on the country’s domestic agenda. It endeavours to address the triple challenges of poverty, inequality and unemployment through the implementation of an independent foreign policy, within a highly volatile, uncertain, complex, ambiguous (VUCA) and dynamic international environment.

According to the Annual Performance Plan(APP), the conduct of South Africa’s foreign policy would be driven by the quest to realise the aspirations of the NDP Vision 2030 and its development trajectory. This would be done with full recognition of the challenges posed by international environment the Department operates in.

With regard to international relations and cooperation Chapter 7, the NDP focuses 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.

There has been a clear and deliberate move to ensure there is a link between the activities of the Department and the implementation of Chapter 7 of the NDP Vision 2030. The NDP underscores the importance of building a nation that contributes to the prosperity of the southern Africa region, the African continent and the betterment of the lives of the marginalised throughout the world.

The NDP further requires that South Africa build a resilient economy which would contribute towards creating a working nation, in order to narrow and eventually eliminate the gap between the rich and poor. The Department recognises that the national priorities as contained in the NDP are inextricably-linked to the aspirations of the African continent. Hence, economic diplomacy would be used to promote the country as a trade and investment destination, thereby attracting foreign investment and also boosting its tourism sector[[2]](#footnote-3).

The aspirations of the NDP have also found expression inthe Southern Africa Development Community (SADC)’s development mechanism, the Revised Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP). These aspirations are also found in the continental programme as encapsulated in the African Union’s (AU) Agenda 2063 Vision, and in the UN 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development Goals. The economic development integration of SADC remains a key focus area[[3]](#footnote-4).

1. **Planned policy initiatives**

The Department intends to enhance its operational capacity in two key areas in the medium term:

The Foreign Service Bill was adopted by the National Assembly in November 2019, it has been submitted to the President for assent.

The Department would provide management and guidance for its public entity, the ARF, to revive the process on the Partnership for Development Bill.

1. **Legislative mandates of the Department**

According to theStrategic Plan 2020-2025, the Department is further responsible for regulation and implementation under the following Acts[[4]](#footnote-5):

* *The African Renaissance and International Cooperation Fund (ARF) Act, 2001 (Act 51 0f 2001)*: The Act establishes the Fund to enhance cooperation between the South Africa and other countries, in particular, African countries. This is achieved through the promotion of democracy, good governance, the prevention and resolution of conflict, socio-economic development and integration, humanitarian assistance and human resource development.
* *The Foreign States Immunities Act, 1981 (Act 87 of 1981)*: This Act regulates the extent of the immunity of foreign states from the jurisdiction of courts of the Republic and provides for matters connected therewith.
* *The Diplomatic Immunities and Privileges Act, 2001 (Act 37 of 2001)*: This Act provides for the immunities and privileges of diplomatic missions and consular posts and their members, heads of state, special envoys and certain representatives of the United Nations and its specialized agencies, and other international organizations and of certain other people. Provision is also made for immunities and privileges pertaining to international conferences and meetings held in South Africa.
* The *Measures and Guidelines for Enhanced Coordination of South Africa’s International Engagements* and its annexures, approved by Cabinet in 2009, establish more effective measures and mechanisms to coordinate the conduct of international relations and the implementation of South Africa’s foreign policy.
* *The White Paper on Foreign Policy*, approved by Cabinet in 2011, assesses South Africa’s foreign policy against the rising expectations of the critical role of foreign policy to meet domestic priorities.
* Foreign Service Dispensation (FSD) is implemented in terms of the provisions of Section 3(3) (c) of the Public Service Act, 1994 (Act 103 of 1994), as amended, and is applicable to designated employees who serve in a foreign country at a South African mission abroad and fall within the scope of the Public Service Coordinating Bargaining Council.

The Department is also a custodian of international agreements (bilateral and multilateral) concluded by the Republic in terms of relevant constitutional provisions (sections 231(2) and 231(3) of the Constitution.

1. **Overview of the Department’s strategic outlookand budget for 2020/21; and theMTEF expenditure focus**

**6.1 Strategic outlook in theStrategic Plan 2020/25**

International responsibility is to build the country’s role as an influential continental and global actor and partner. Key deliverables would be around the participation of South Africa as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council 2019-2020. The other focus area would be on deliverables as a chair of the African Union (AU) for 2020.

The key priority areas of the Department for the next five years were reported as follows:

* Enhancing the African Agenda and Sustainable Development;
* 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; and
* Participation in the Global System of Governance.

The Department envisaged using diplomacy and international relations to contribute to economic growth and development in South Africa. It would further accelerate and strengthen regional integration and continental development. The Department is committed to help build and capacitate democratic and development institutions in the region, continent and Global South.

South Africa would continue to strengthen South-South relations in pursuance of South Africa’s national priorities. It would leverage relations with the North in the advancement of national interest and continental development agenda.

As Chair of the AU 2020, South Africa would work guided by principles of Pan Africanism. The AU term coincides with the inaugural year of the African Continent Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). South Africa is committed to support flagship projects of the AU, and other similar projects to boost intra-Africa trade, and enhance industrialisation prospects. WamkeleMene, a South African, is the new Secretary General of AfCFTA based in Accra, Ghana.

It is stated in the Strategic Plan that South Africa would support other continental institutions like the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) and the AU Development Agency (AUDA). These would be driving initiatives from the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD), Pan African Parliament (PAP), and the Pan African Women’s Organisation (PAWO).

As the chair of the AU, on matters regarding conflicts in Africa, South Africa would work tirelessly toward peace and security in the continent. It would be specially focusing on the ongoing violence in Libya, the Sahel region and the eastern parts of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

South Africa was reported steadfast to make a real commitment of ‘Silencing the Guns in Africa 2020’. In this regard, it intended to collaborate with sister countries in the continent, focussing on root causes of conflict to create an environment for permanent peace and security in Africa.

In the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), the Department would continue working under the theme- ‘Continuing the Legacy, Working for Peace’. The real significance of this theme is that the majority of issues in the UNSC were reported as those of peace and security in Africa. South Africa would continue to promote the agenda of peace and security, gender equality and sustainable development.

South Africa’s experience during its tenure in the UNSC has reinforced its conviction about the urgent need to reform the UNSC. It would therefore join with partners of Global South to reform the UNSC; and it remained cognisant of the retreat to unilateralism by major actors in global governance. South Africa would redouble efforts to achieve the objective for an inclusive global village.

South Africa has ratified the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. It would continue with its commitment to a world free from the threat of nuclear weapons. It remained resolute in nuclear energy being used for peaceful purposes only.

1. **Annual Performance Plan 2020/2021 (APP) of Department**
   1. **Performance delivery environment**

As an African country, South Africa’s Foreign Policy is driven by a clear and critical understanding of its national, regional and continental priorities in a multipolar world. The geostrategic politics of the continent are becoming increasingly central to global political economic competition for natural resources and market share.The Department was reported recognising a need for managing and coordinating other domestic role players contributing to the achievement of South Africa’s Foreign Policy objectives.

Achievements of its Foreign Policy since 1994, have enhanced South Africa’s stature as a member of the international community, boosting its political influence and increasing its economic standing to the point of being regarded as a globally significant emerging economy. There was a link between South Africa’s national interest and Africa’s stability, unity and prosperity. South Africa has therefore placed the advancement of the African Agenda at the centre of its foreign policy trajectory, and has had considerable success in promoting the interest of Africa in different forums.

* 1. **Strategic focus areas**

The Department is committed to deliver on the following strategic areas in the 2020/21 financial year:

* + 1. **Building a better South Africa**

It is stated that the Foreign Policy should be underpinned, influenced and shaped by domestic imperatives. The Department is noted as having a dynamic role to play in the improvement of lives of South Africans. This it would do by utilising bilateral relations and global footprint in identifying strategic opportunities for skills and knowledge development, targeted investments and growing markets for South African products and services in an integrated and inclusive manner. This refers to domestic imperatives linking to international relations work – these activities would contribute to interventions and targets outlined in Priority 7 of the MTSF. The access for South African products and services to foreign markets would contribute to increasing manufacturing and to an export orientated economy.

* + 1. **Building a better Africa**

The Department has put emphasis on the centrality of Africa as the centrepiece of South Africa’s Foreign Policy. The Department would continue supporting multilateralism to resolve global disputes and assist the continent in laying the foundation for a shared future.

The African Development Bank (ADB) had predicted economic growth in Africa, at 3.9% in 2020 and at 4.1% in 2021. Africa’s growth was projected to be higher than that of the emerging and developing regions. It has been argued that the rapid economic growth would be needed to accommodate the expected population growth. With the advent of COVID-19, it is not clear whether this view still stands.

Africa has a relatively younger population where the majority are under the age of 25. By 2034, the region is expected to have a larger workforce than of either China or India. The ADB has argued that a borderless Africa, would lay a foundation for a viable continental market to accelerate economic growth and allow Africa to be more competitive in global trade and value chains.

As chair of the AU, and as chair of the AU ‘s Committee of African Heads of State and Government on climate change, South Africa would be advancing African positions towards the success of the United Nations for Climate Change Conference (UNFCCC) Glasgow Climate conference in November 2020.

* + 1. **The African Union chairship**

The Department is committed to deliver on continental agenda on the implementation of the AU Agenda 2063 ‘The Africa we want’. It would ensure that South Africa contributes to the operationalisation of the identified Agenda 2063 flagship projects.

South Africa is expected to lead continental efforts aimed at resolving conflicts. The conflict hot-spots are reported to be in South Sudan, Libya, Somalia, the Sahel region and the remaining conflict in the eastern parts of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

South Africa would chair the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) and the African Heads of State and Government on climate change (CAHOSC). All these platforms would be used to advance economic development, peace and security, agenda of good governance and climate change in the continent.

The APP pointed out that South Africa undertook to use its AU Chairship and Troika membership to advance the economic integration of the continent. This would be achieved through the operationalisation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

The entering into force of AfCFTA on 30 May 2019, was regarded as very significant. It is regarded as a key priority of Agenda 2063, and a flagship project for the continent. It is the world’s largest single market of over 1.2 billion consumers.

The Department has aimed to enhance bilateral, political and economic relations with SADC countries, as well as countries elsewhere in the continent. Integration agenda is based on political, security and economic integration. To facilitate integration, SADC has developed economic and strategic blueprint adopted in 2015, the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP). The Department undertook to closely monitor South Africa’s progress on the implementation of the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan projects.

The Department has undertaken to play a key role in rationalising the regional economic communities (Recs) towards a CFTA. The Department would play a key role in revitalising the NEPAD Presidential Champion program on infrastructure development. It would also promote good governance systems through the APRM.

* + 1. **Building a better world: Reform of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC)**

The Department would continue to prioritise and participate actively to advance the reform of the UNSC in the context of the ongoing intergovernmental negotiations (IGN) in the UN General Assembly.

South Africa’s engagement in the UN is based on its commitment to promote an equitable rules-based multilateral system. It is informed by the recognition that the UN does not reflect current global political and economic realities. South Africa’s engagement would be to advance the reform of the existing global governance architecture with a view to improve the voice and representation of Africa and the developing world. It has also intended to draw attention to the responsiveness of the UN system to the needs and challenges faced by Africa and developing states.

In its tenure in the UNSC, South Africa would continue to promote the maintenance of international peace and security. This would be by advocating peaceful settlements of disputes and inclusive dialogue.

* + 1. **Promotion of cooperation between the AU and the UN**

South Africa joined the UNSC for the 3rd time on 1 January 2019, for the period 2019-2020. Membership of the UNSC placed South Africa at the epicentre of international decision-making on peace and security matters. It also enabled South Africa to promote its national interest values. These include the importance of women in peace and security, championing the course of children in armed conflict situations, the rule of law, post conflict reconstruction and development, peaceful resolution of conflict, preventative diplomacy and the nexus between peace and development. Being in the UNSC has presented the opportunity to exploit the advantage of the longstanding western alliance to review and redefine strategic partners and positions in a manner that complement the African Agenda.

During February 2020, South Africa assumed the Chair of the AU Assembly-Theme for AU Agenda- ‘Silencing the Guns’. South Africa would utilise her presence in the UNSC and the AU to promote conflict resolution and the stabilisation of post conflict situations on the African continent. It would continue to use its position to strengthen cooperation between the UN and AU.

South Africa would have to skilfully manage contradictory expectations from the AU and UN member states.

There are bi-annual meetings between the UNSC and the African Union Peace and Security Council (AUPSC). The important milestone for South Africa was that members of the UNSC travelled to Addis Ababa in October 2019, to meet with the AUPSC during South Africa presidency of the UNSC.

South Africa would prioritise Joint UN-AU framework. The framework should emphasise the prevention and mediation of conflict and sustaining peace, responding to conflict, addressing the root causes and continuous review and enhancement of the partnership.

* + 1. **Interdepartmental coordination mechanism**

The Department would develop innovative ways of strengthening coordination mechanisms on issues of global governance with other governmental departments. This would include weekly coordination meetings on mechanisms on South Africa’s membership in the UNSC.

* + 1. **Confirm South Africa’s influence**

The Department has undertaken to continue to position South Africa as an essential interlocutor on the international stage. It would also position South Africa as a bridge-builder and solution finder for intractable problems that have been confronting the international community. That is adopting approaches and solutions that are intended at solving issues and not favour the interests of one or other party.

* + 1. **Counterterrorism and extremism**

The Department would continue with efforts to combat international terrorism under the auspices of the UN by participating in UN counter terrorism structures. The abuse of the internet and social media platform for recruitment and planning attacks, radicalisation of the youth and violent extremism leading to terrorist attacks were reported gaining increased attention.

* + 1. **Disarmament**

South Africa would promote disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, including the AU’s ‘Silencing the Guns by 2020’, in collaboration with UN and AU agencies. South Africa would use its accession to the Treaty on Prohibition on Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) to advocate for the early entry into force of the treaty. South Africa would commemorate 10 years since the entry into force of the Pelindaba Treaty, which remains one of the building blocs towards a world-free of nuclear weapons. South Africa would continue its call for the implementation of the UN Programme on Combatting illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. It would call for the signing of the Arms Treaty, as the only legally binding instrument for promoting transparency and cooperation in the area of conventional weapons.

* + 1. **Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda**

This agenda would be mainstreamed in all aspects of the Department’s work on peace and security domestically and, in the region, the continent and the world. It would continue to promote WPS noting the critical and dynamic nexus between gender, development and peace and security.

* + 1. **Women’s empowerment, gender equality and mainstreaming**

South Africa has been elected to serve in the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and the Commission of Social Development for 2019-2022. South Africa would use these positions to advance gender equality and women empowerment in South Africa, Africa and the developing world.

* + 1. **Sustainable Development Agenda**

The Department would continue to ensure that sustainable development remains a global priority to secure full implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda, the AU Agenda 2063, SADC’s RISDP. At the national level, the Department would participate in the new coordination mechanism for the implementation of sustainable development.

* + 1. **Climate change**

South Africa would continue to fully support and advance collective multilateral response to climate change, that is progressive and equitable under the auspices of the UN Framework Convention on climate change (UNFCCC). Human influenced climate change was reported occurring at a very high rate. South Africa would assume the chairship of the Committee of African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change (CAHOSCC) in 2020, representing Africa in the UN Secretary General’s climate summit.

South Africa advocates for a global response that is equitable. The response should provide development space for developing countries, while developed countries take the lead in emission reduction and funding.

* + 1. **South-South cooperation**

The Department would continue to advance mutually beneficial South-South cooperation. This would be to create effective response in addressing the historic marginalisation of these countries, through structured bilateral mechanisms and multilateral agreements. The Department would continue strengthening and consolidating South-South relations. This would reflect the shift in the balance of the global distribution of power and increasing influence of emerging economies in the multilateral trading system.

The countries of the South share the need to restructure the global political, economic, and financial architecture. The restructured architecture should be balanced, representative, inclusive and equitable, multilateralism, respect of international law, and advocate a focussed regional integration in fast-growing markets.

The Department would continue to use its membership and engagements with groupings of the South. These are the Non Aligned Movement (NAM), Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), the Group of 77 and China, India, Brazil, South Africa (IBSA), Indian Ocean Realm Association(IORA) and Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa (BRICS) to advance foreign policy objectives.

The Department would advocate for focussed regional integration in the fast-growing markets. It would strengthen regional cooperation in areas of interest with the countries of the South.

* + 1. **Cooperation with the countries of the North**

Focus in cooperation with the countries of the North would be to bridge the gap between the rich North and the poor South. South Africa would continue to facilitate and monitor implementation of existing mechanisms such as the Africa-European Union (EU) Strategy, which provides a framework for relations between Africa and European Union.

South Africa’s primary focus for diplomatic efforts in this region is on trade and investment including support for Presidential investment initiative. Focus is on sectors that promote industrialisation, increased beneficiation, those that can transform South Africa’s economy.

South Africa successfully lobbied for the EU to become SADC-EPA (Economic Partnership Agreements) group’s largest trading partner, with South Africa accounting for the largest part of EU imports to and EU exports from the region. The EU has recently stated that the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) would form a framework for supporting the achievements of the SDGs and support for climate change projects- hence showing cooperation vs donor/recipient relationship.

South Africa is engaging with the global economic processes such as the World Trade Organisation (WTO), World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), to promote the African Agenda 2063. It also participates in the TICAD (Tokyo International Conference on African Development, EU and Africa, Group of 7 (G7). Shared prosperity could also be realised through the reform of international finance institutions such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and the World Trade Organisations.

In order to support the development agenda of the developmental state, the Department should ensure that skilled diplomats are placed in key strategic and economic institutions to pursue this agenda.

The Department is to develop a strategy on its engagements in the G20, which is one of the important forums for global economic policy coordination. Such a strategy would take into account the reality that the G20 was conceptualised to stabilise and strengthen the global economy by bringing together the major advanced and emerging market economies. South Africa would continue participating in the G20 with the aim of advancing a better South Africa and contribute to a better and safer Africa and a better world.

* + 1. **Relations with regions of the world**

Economic diplomacy was reported at the heart of the Department’s engagement with the world. The Department negotiates and navigates international trends beyond its immediate region and continent. The Department’s international network of missions is regarded a strategic asset that is being leveraged to realise maximum return on the investment for the people of South Africa.

* + 1. **South Africa and the Americas**

The US economic growth was projected to slow down in 2019 and beyond because of the trade war with China. The Southern African Customs Union (SACU) was unable to conclude a free trade agreement with the US. A cooperative trade arrangement was concluded instead, named a Trade, Investment and Development Cooperation Agreement. The agreement would build on trade benefits offered under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA). Ratification of agreements between SACU and the Mercosur trade bloc had led to an increase in trade.

* + 1. **Asia and the Middle East**

South Africa maintains strong political relations with the countries of Asia.

There are strong partnerships developing and the Department has to execute a more assertive economic strategy towards the region. South Africa remained committed to a stable and peaceful Middle East, and supports sustainable and just solutions to the various conflicts in the region.

* + 1. **Communicating South Africa’s foreign policy**

Public Diplomacy (PD) would ensure that domestic and international audiences are informed on matters of South Africa’s foreign policy. Public Diplomacy strategy would be developed and strengthened to ensure that it encompasses more than a communication function. PD would ensure timeous delivery of messages to missions on global developments- missions were regarded a critical component for communicating South African foreign policy and play pivotal role in branding and marketing the country. It has been the Committee’s concern that PD was currently more of a communication strategy and needed to be supported by a comprehensive Public Diplomacy strategy.

Communication platforms would extent to bringing foreign policy to the people through Public Participation Partnership (PPP), symposia, outreach programmes. It would strengthen working relations with like-minded entities e.g. Brand SA, SA Tourism – to bring a uniquely South African image that aims to attract much needed investments and tourism opportunities. It intended to invest in new technology to broaden its current reach. However, the ICT capacity of the Department was still a concern.

* + 1. **Building a better Department**

Human resources was reportedas the engine that drives the Department and was the key to improving operational effectiveness and deliver quality services. The Department would implement career management framework. It would be aligned to the Foreign Service Training Strategy to nurture existing employees and improve performance management.

The Department reported that it intends to review its organisational structure, implement effective financial management, management accounting, finance accounting, SCM, risk and internal controls in line with the PFMA. The Department would furtherensure digital transformation of business operations to enable efficient delivery of its mandate in a smart and secure manner.

The Department would continue to deliver a world class protocol services to the President, Deputy President, Minister and Deputy Minsters International Relations and other Cabinet ministers. The Diplomatic Academy and International School has been certified as a training provider.

The APP was reported delivered amid fiscal constraints, recurring qualified audit outcomes and an information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure that is in urgent need of an upgrade. Exchange fluctuation was negatively impacting on the operations of the Department.

The Department has undertaken to review and finalise its organisational structure to align it with its strategic plan. There is a shortfall on the compensation of employees’ budget, there is no filling of vacancies currently, an issue which may impact negatively on service delivery. In order to mitigate the associated risk, the Department would focus on upskilling and reskilling its human resources.The Department indicated it may consider aspects such as but not limited to, reviewing its global footprint and seeking accreditation on a non- residential basis.

Office of the Chief State Law Adviser would continue to provide legal advice on international law.

Once promulgated, the Foreign Service Bill would require drafting of necessary regulations and undertake awareness programs of popularising it.

The Department would continue with programmes to mainstream gender, youth and people with disabilities.

1. **Highlights of the APP in quarterly performance**

**Program 1: Administration**

The Diplomatic Academy would be a centre of excellence in foreign service training and the plan is to conduct a gap analysis on delivering training in AU/UN languages.

ICT systems have been declared archaic and obsolete. The Department has committed to place ICT as an enabler in the process to move into automation and digital age of business processes, in order to secure information, reduce turnaround time and improve service delivery.

One outreach initiative has been planned to support gender mainstreaming, job shadowing, outreach targeting youth, and people living with disability.

The APP provided for one strategic intervention in 4thquarter to effectively implement the White Paper on the Rights of Persons with disability.It has also planned to have consultations with stakeholders on the implementation of the Foreign Service Bill, regarding formulations of codes, regulations, and directives to enable implementation.

**Programme 2: International Relations**

The Department is to review structured bilateral mechanisms to align them to the aspirations of the NDP and MTSF. The review is aimed to be completed in 2ndquarter.

There would be three regional reports on outcomes of high level visits, which would be aligned to the NDP and MTSF. There would also be reports on activities relating to trade seminars, investment and tourism promotion. There would be a report on regional integration reflecting South Africa’s contribution towards peace, stability, good governance and democracy and on the implementation of the RISDP.

**Programme 3: International Cooperation**

The Department has planned to develop a long term strategy for South Africa’s membership and candidatures to international organisations. This would enable it to identify strategic international organisations that would respond to national interest; and which strategic positions to campaign for.

It has also planned to review and identify which international organisations’ memberships to pursue. This is crucial as it would enable the Department to assess the continued relevance and usefulness of existing memberships. The Department has also planned to identify strategic international organisations to support candidatures in strategic positions. Candidature diplomacy is important where the country focuses on influencing outcomes of strategic organisations in pursuit of national interest.

The Department, would ensure reporting on South Africa’s international obligations to human rights bodies, and issue country reports on progress on the implementation of international treaties that South Africa is a party to.

There would be a monitoring report on South Africa’s contribution to the operationalisation of identified Agenda 2063 flagship projects.The Department would develop AU chairship strategy and ensure it is implemented, and report on achieved identify objectives achieved by3rdquarter.

The Department would ensure that South Africa’s commitments and efforts to resolve continental conflicts are honoured within the 1st quarter. South Africa would continue to extend support for elections through the SADC mechanism, SEOM.

**Programme 4: Public Diplomacy and State Protocol**

Develop, implement and monitor the effectiveness of the Public Diplomacy strategy. The Department has also planned to have three public participation programmes (PPP) to promote South Africa’s foreign policy and outreach on Foreign Service Bill once assented to.

1. **Infrastructure projects**

In response to the Committee’s recommendation to assess and identify the best method of salvaging the state owned properties in Namibia, the Department drew up a strategy. Furthermore, the Department was requested to put into practice the strategy for the management of state-owned properties abroad, in readiness to implementation of the Foreign Service Bill. There is a plan to have a professional assessment done and work to commence towards the renovation of properties in Namibia. A feasibility study will be commissioned for building a new chancery and Official Residence in Luanda, Angola.

1. **Strategic Plan 2020-2025 African Renaissance 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. The African Renaissance and International Cooperation Fund was thus established in 2000 pursuant to an Act of Parliament, the African Renaissance and International Cooperation Fund Act (Act 51 of 2000). The fund’s mandate is to enhance cooperation between South Africa and other countries, particularly African countries.

The initiatives relate to the promotion of democracy and good governance, the prevention and resolution of conflicts, socioeconomic development and integration, humanitarian assistance and human resource development. Countries in need of assistance apply for funding from the fund.

The ARF is located in the Department, under the supervision of the Director-General. Transfers to the Fund are included in the monies appropriated to the Department. Consequently, the Portfolio Committee on International Relations and Cooperation (the Committee) oversees the activities of this Fund.

The strategic focus of the ARF is guided by the NDP 2030, as unpacked in the Medium Term Strategic Framework(MTSF) 2019-2024, which is aligned with the integration agenda of SADC’s Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP), AU’s Agenda 2063, and the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030 Agenda.

The ARF would support South Africa’s strategic goals for the African continent, namely, the resolution of conflict and creating conditions for socioeconomic development. In South Africa’s view, peace and stability were a sine qua non to socioeconomic development. The focus for the medium term would be to utilise the Chairship of the African Union in 2020 to advance economic integration of the continent through the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), and lead continental efforts aimed at solving conflicts in South Sudan, Libya, Somalia and the Sahel region The executive authority would provide strategic direction during 2020/21. The ARF would continue to be an invaluable instrument in pursuit of goals of South Africa’s Foreign Policy.

* + 1. **Planned Legislative and policy mandates**

The ARF Act 2000 (Act 51 of 2000), should be amended to provide for the name change of the ARF to the South African Development Partnership Fund (SADPF), and for the designation of the Head as an Accounting Authority, who will be responsible together with the Secretariat for the administration of the Fund. The Fund would remain an entity listed in terms of the PFMA, 1999 (Act 1 of 1999).Funding of projects would still be done on the basis of concurrence between the Minister of International Relations and the Minister of Finance.

* + 1. **ARF targets for the next five years**

There are new performance areas[[5]](#footnote-6) introduced under the ARF. These are important elements needed for ensuring that the entity performs as expected.

* Enhanced cooperation between the Republic and other countries, in particular African countries.
* Promote democracy and good governance
* Prevention and resolution of conflicts
* Socio-economic development and integration
* Humanitarian assistance
* Human resource development

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. Erratic weather patterns, which are largely the result of climate change effects, require urgent attention. Through this fund, South Africa is able to be counted among those who strive to restore human dignity and bring relief to people in distress as and when humanitarian situations arise. The ARF goes a step further and work with like-minded countries and partners to assist people affected by man-made disasters and disease not as a matter of charity but to restore hope and human dignity.

One of the objectives of the ARF is to promote democracy and good governance. The ARF would continue to support the Southern African Development Community (SADC) election observer missions, as regular elections strengthen public participation in choosing their own destiny. In this regard, the sustained and credible holding of free, fair and just elections with full public participation throughout the continent will enable South Africa to achieve this objective. There is a need for capable states and effective government as well as willing leadership to satisfy the needs and aspirations of Africa’s populace as encompassed in the AU’s Agenda 2063.

The ARF would continue to focus on capacity-building in Africa, and strengthening governance institutions and improve efficiency and effectiveness in the management of economic and social affairs.

Through the ARF, South Africa is committed to support the implementation of the aspiration of Africa 2063 to silence the guns by 2020. The ARF would therefore participate in post-conflict reconstruction and development through deployment of its limited financial resources.

South Africa would continue to work with other countries and partners to provide temporary humanitarian relief in times of natural disasters and outbreaks of disease. These occurrences are often resultant from the erratic climate conditions experienced in recent times.

* 1. **The African Renaissance Fund Annual Performance Plan 2020-2021**

South Africa’s Foreign Policy envisions achieving an African continent that is democratic, peaceful, non-racial, non-sexist, united and prosperous, which contributes to a world that is just and equitable. South Africa pursues this policy vision guided by African values of Ubuntu and the central goal to eradicate the triple challenges of inequality, poverty and unemployment.

The APP of the entity notes that the 6th Administration has identified seven Priorities, contained in the Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) 2019-2024. As Foreign Policy is an extension on national priorities, and the ARF would contribute to the 7th priority of ‘A Better Africa and Better World’ This would be achieved through enhancing cooperation between the Republic and other countries, in particular African countries, through promotion of democracy, good governance, prevention and resolution of conflict, socio-economic development and integration, humanitarian assistance and human resource development.

* + 1. **Situational analysis**

The ARF remains committed to pursuing the six strategic objectives in the ARF Act 2000. In the last five years, the ARF responded to demands (demand driven) necessitated by both socio-economic trends and political imperatives. Due to climate change in the past five years, Sub Saharan Africa experienced unprecedented climatic hazards including cyclones resulting in devastating floods and in some parts, drought has been experienced. As a result, the ARF recorded 49% of its allocations towards humanitarian assistance related support. Bilateral cooperation with other African countries comprised 35% of allocations. Consolidation of contribution towards the promotion of democracy and good governance took 9%, and conflict resolution took 4%.

In order to ensure that funding through the ARF is effective, the ARF would adopt the values of the Paris and Rome declarations on aid effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action. Paris Declaration 2005 is a roadmap aimed at improving the quality of aid and its impact on development. It is based on five pillars – ownership, alignment, harmonisation, managing for results and mutual accountability.

The Accra Agendareaffirms commitment to Paris Declaration and calls for greater partnerships between different parties working on aid and development, and transfer of skills and technology.

According to the OECD findings, Official Development Assistance is experiencing a downward trend. In South Africa there has also been downward trend in fiscal allocations to departments. It is incumbent upon ARF to be smarter in its operations in order to deliver on its mandate albeit the reduction in allocation. It would have to work smart to maximise the impact of its interventions on the African continent.

* + 1. **The African continent**

The APP states that there is improved political stability positively impacting democracy and good governance. Africa has remaining pockets of instability and insecurity due to mainly intra-state conflict.

* + 1. **African Continental Free Trade Area**

In the next five years, the ARF would focus on projects that support the operationalisation of the AfCFTA. This would be in line with the socio-economic strategy. The AfCFTA would bring together all 55 member states of the African Union, covering a market of more than 1.2 billion people, including a growing middle class and a combined gross domestic product of more than US$3.4 trillion. In terms of participating countries, it would be the largest free trade area since the formation of the WTO, has the potential to boost intra-Africa trade. The objective is to create a single continental market for goods and services.

ARF would continue to provide technical support for elections in the SADC region. South Africa’s participation in the Southern Africa Development Community election observer missions (SEOM) demonstrates its commitment to free, fair and credible elections, and further encourages democratic practices and good governance in the region. South Africa’s participation in SEOM also contributes towards creation of constitutional frameworks and a climate conducive for holding credible elections.

The ARF would focus on partnering with other development agencies and countries with common values and interests in the execution of projects. This is in the wake of the effects of climate change evident in many parts of Africa – some countries experiencing exceptionally hot and dry weather, others experiencing rains which are devastatingly torrential in some areas according to the World Food Program.

* + 1. **Internal environment analysis**

The ARF is operated through an Advisory Committee which is comprised of: the Director General (DG) or delegate; three officials of the Department appointed by the Minister; two officials from National Treasury appointed by Minister of Finance. The Advisory Committee makes recommendations to the two Ministers on the disbursements of funds through loans or other financial assistance. The DG is the accounting officer of the Fund in terms of the PFMA 1999. The DG has created a secretariat consisting of officials to assist with disbursement of funds. Officials assist with monitoring and administration of projects relating to the fund.

The ARF utilises the Department’s systems and processes which have brought their own challenges in terms of project implementation. The ARF allocations and pledges are guided by both socio-economic and political imperatives in line with South Africa’s foreign policy objectives.

The ARF budget allocations for the MTSF is R143.6 million. Therefore, the ARF would implement the 2020/25 Strategic plan in a constraint fiscal environment with significant reductions in annual allocations. The ARF would be able to achieve its mandate through the Department’s 125 missions in 108 countries abroad.

* + 1. **ARF Planned performance for next five years**
       1. **Promotion of democracy and good governance – Aspiration 3 Agenda 2063**

The ARF would provide technical assistance to identified countries that would hold elections within the five years. Technical assistance is provided in partnership with the Electoral Commission of South Africa as an implementing agent. South Africa is committed to building strong institutions and consolidating democratic gains. The support would be provided through South African institutions. South Africa participates in SADC SEOMs as its commitment to free, fair and credible elections, and further encourages democratic practices and good governance.

* + - 1. **Prevention and resolution of conflicts – Aspiration 4 Africa Agenda**

Year 2020 is said to mark the apex of the AU flagship programme – ‘Silencing the Guns’- South Africa would continue to support mediation and conflict resolution efforts. South Africa as a chair of the AU, would focus on leading continental efforts aimed at resolving conflicts in South Sudan, Libya, Somalia and the Sahel region, and the remaining conflict in parts of the eastern DRC.

* + - 1. **Support to socio-economic development and integration – Aspiration 1**

South Africa is of the view that AfCFTA would accelerate progress towards continental unity and integration for sustainable growth, trade, exchange of goods, services and free movement of persons and fast-track economic integration. The ARF would implement projects that would improve the socio economic conditions of citizens. The funding of projects that would fast-track the operationalisation of the AfCFTA would realise a shared prosperity for Africa.

* + - 1. **Provision of humanitarian assistance**

The ARF funding would be utilised in cases of humanitarian crises, occasioned by natural disasters and conflict within the continent and beyond. South Africa has played a leading role in influencing and shaping the global humanitarian system, it has demonstrated its human face through its humanitarian diplomacy in times of need.

* + - 1. **Human resource development – Aspiration 6**

This related to capacity building to strengthen institutions and build an Africa whose development is reliant on the potential of African people.

* + - 1. **Cooperation between the Republic and other countries, especially African countries**

The ARF would partner with like-minded partners to share costs and bring additional skills sets that would improve implementation of projects. In the light of current fiscal constraints, partnerships would be critical in the delivery of projects.

* + 1. **Effective management of resources through sound administration and good governance (SCM prescripts)**

All projects are evaluated by the ARF Advisory Committee, and must comply with concurrence by Minister of Finance and monitoring of project implementation as per project plan composition of the ARF Advisory Committee. This would continue to bring to the fore the challenges of the governance structure of ARF.

1. **Overview of Departmental budget 2020/21 and MTEF expenditure focus**

The Department would be allocated anincreased budget amount of R6 850,179 in 2020/21 compared to R6 302,711 in 2019/20 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.According to the 2020 Estimates of National Expenditure, Chapter 7 of the National Development Plan details a vision for facilitating South Africa’s broad‐based socioeconomic development and fostering strong international ties. This articulation is supported by priority 7 –A Better Africa and Better World- of government’s 2019‐2024 medium‐term strategic framework.

Over the medium term, the Department of International Relations and Cooperation aims to give effect to these guiding policies by focusing on strengthening the African Agenda and regional integration; consolidating global economic, political and social relations; and developing and managing state‐owned properties in foreign missions.

The work of the Department is primarily realised through the 125 diplomatic missions in 108 countries in which South Africa has representation. As the Department largely relies on its personnel to perform its functions, an estimated 45.6% (R9.8 billion) of its total expenditure over the medium term is earmarked for compensation of employees. This would include the Foreign Service wage bill, allowances payable to transferred staff in terms of the Foreign Service dispensation policy, membership fees payable to international organisations, and the development and maintenance of infrastructure in foreign missions. Spending on compensation of employees is expected to increase at an average annual rate of 5.9%, from R2.9 billion in 2019/20 to R3.4 billion in 2022/23. Total expenditure is expected to increase at an average annual rate of 4%, from R6.5 billion in 2019/20 to R7.3 billion in 2022/23.

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

The Department would continue to play an active role in the African Union’s structures and processes for the advancement of peace, security and conflict prevention in Africa. South Africa has been nominated to chair the African Union in 2020 with a mandate to ensure that there are linkages between development, good governance, peace and stability. As chair, the Department would focus on:

 promoting economic development, trade and investment by seeking ways to foster inclusive growth and sustainable development;

 enhancing peace and security efforts in Africa; and

 supporting good governance through the African peer review mechanism, the African Union structure responsible for driving the union’s agenda of good governance.

These activities would be carried out in the *International Transfers* programme, which has a total budget of R2.4 billion over the MTEF period.South Africa’s membership contribution to the African Union is expected to decrease from R437.9 million in 2019/20 to R275.4 million in 2022/23. This is due to South Africa having contributed an additional amount of R413.3 million in 2019/20 and 2020/21, due to funding shortfalls. The decrease in contributions in 2021/22 and 2022/23 is expected to lead to a decrease in spending in the *International Transfers* programme, from R855.6 million in 2019/20 to R756.6 million in 2022/23.

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

The Department would continue to focus on consolidating economic, political and social relations through structured bilateral mechanisms, high‐level engagements and the creation of country‐specific strategies to promote national priorities. South Africa would continue to accelerate its economic diplomacy and grow its regional, continental and global trade and investment partnerships through engagements and activities undertaken by South African missions abroad to promote the country’s economic interests, investment opportunities, tourism, skills development and cultural exchange. Examples of this include foreign missions holding tourism promotion events and meetings to boost South African tourism and promote South Africa as a destination of choice for business and leisure.

Accordingly, in each year over the medium term, the Department would seek to inform and promote South Africa’s foreign policy to domestic and international audiences by producing a targeted 12 public participation programmes, and publishing 90 media statements and 9 opinion pieces. As a result of these activities, spending in the *Public Diplomacy and Protocol Services* programme is expected to increase at an average annual rate of 7.3%, from R318.9 million in 2019/20 to R393.7 million in 2022/23. This expenditure includes compensation of employees, property payments, operating leases, and travel and subsistence.

***Developing and managing state***‐***owned properties in foreign missions***

Over the medium term, the Department would seek to reduce its rental portfolio and operational costs associated with the rental of more than 1 000 properties abroad; and ensure the longevity of its 127 state‐owned properties by conducting essential maintenance, repairs and renovations. As such, the Department would focus on developing vacant state‐owned land in Luanda (Angola), New Delhi (India) and Gaborone (Botswana); and renovating state owned properties in Mbabane (Eswatini), The Hague (Netherlands), Windhoek and Walvis Bay (Namibia), and Brasilia (Brazil). This is expected to lead to a decrease in expenditure on leases. The Department also plans to assess the conditions of its properties in Europe that are more than 50 years old, particularly in London (England), Paris (France), Vienna (Austria), Rome (Italy), Brussels (Belgium), Madrid (Spain) and Copenhagen (Denmark) to inform decisions on their future holding and use. For these capital investment objectives, R1.2 billion over the medium term has been set aside in the *Office Accommodation* subprogramme in the *Administration* programme.

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

The headquarters of the Department and guesthouses were constructed under a PPP arrangement. The same facilities management company maintains the properties on behalf of the Department. The Department pays a unitary fee for the services – R256,811,486 (2019/20 figure) per annum (including vat) to the PPP company. The PPP agreement would continue until September 2034.

1. **Expenditure trends for Departmental programmes**

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

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Programme**  **(R million)** | **Adjusted appropriation** | **Medium term estimates** | | |
| **2019/20** | **2020/21** | **2021/22** | **2022/23** |
| 1: Administration | 1 293,319 | 1 762,934 | 1 846,346 | 1 846,346 |
| 2: International Relations | 3 298,158 | 3 308 ,302 | 3 541,669 | 3 670,523 |
| 3: International Cooperation | 547,267 | 536,307 | 548,129 | 557,893 |
| 4: Public Diplomacy & Protocol | 292,810 | 338,642 | 373,451 | 393,662 |
| 5: International Transfers | 871,156 | 903,994 | 728,936 | 756,569 |
| Total | **6 302,711** | **6 850179** | **7 038,531** | **7 328,850** |

Source: 2020/21 Annual Performance Plan of the Department

Table 1 illustrates the medium term expenditure estimates for each programme for the years 2019/20to 2022/23.It could be concluded that the budget allocations for Programmes 1, 2, 4 and 5 have increased, whereas the budget allocation for Programme 3 decreased for the same budget year of 2020/21.The Department continues to experience foreign exchange challenges resulting from a strengthening of other currencies against the Rand.

The Department’s allocated budget for 2020/21 financial year is R6,850 billion.The main cost driver for the Department in terms of economic classification is the compensation of employees which has three main components; the RSA salaries, the transferred staff allowances and the Locally Recruited Personnel salaries.

The Department’s goods and services budget was mainly for the contractual obligations namely, the operating leases for offices and staff accommodation abroad, PPP agreement for the head office building, transfer costs and computer services (bandwidth).

The international transfers for the Department includes contributions to African Union (AU), Southern African Development Communities (SADC), United Nations (UN), African Renaissance and International Cooperation Fund (ARF) and India Brazil and South Africa (IBSA).

* 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.

The programme has been allocated anincreased budget of R1 762,9 in 2020/21 compared to R1 293,3in 2019/20. The programme caters for the overall day to day running of the Department. Over the past five years, the Department continued to portray a good image of the country to the outside world. In both the 4th and 5th Parliaments, the portfolio committees acknowledged the good political work that the Department has been doing. This assessment was informed by the fact that South Africa is now a respected global player. It has been invited to participate in many formerly exclusive global forums, like, the G20 (a Group of 19 states plus the European Union).

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

The purpose of this programme is to promote relations with foreign countries. The Department will continue to support efforts towards democracy and good governance in the region. South Africa would thus continue to participate in election observer missions in Malawi later in the year 2020. Bilateral engagements are a basis for strengthening political and economic relations and provide a platform for advancing national priorities and to lobby support for multilateral engagements and common positions.

**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.

The budget allocation for Programme 2: International Relations has experienced an **increase of R228.8 million from R3.2 billion in 2019/20 to R3.3 billion in 2020/21.** The most significant change being in sub-programmes 1 and 4.

* + 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:
* o providing ongoing financial support for the operations of the Pan African Parliament in terms of the country host agreement.
*  Improve 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.
*  Contribute 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.
* Strengthen 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.
*  Strengthen 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.
*  Strengthen North-South economic and political relations and cooperation to advance the African Agenda through the financing of development initiatives, and supporting institutional and governance reforms on an ongoing basis.

**Subprogrammes**

* **Global System of Governance** provides for multilateralism and a rules based international order. This would entail 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.

The budget allocation for Programme 3: International Cooperation budget has **decreased from R547.2 million in 2019/20 to R536.3 million in 2020/21**. This decrease mainly affected sub-programme 1 allocation.

* + 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**

* Purpose - Communicate South Africa’s role and position in international relations in the domestic and international arenas, and provide protocol services.
* Sub-programmes
*  **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.South Africa has the second largest diplomatic community to Washington, through the accreditation of more than 160 countries and organisations resident in South Africa. The Department will also continue to provide protocol advice and support to the various spheres of government, facilitate holding of international conferences and manage State Protocol Lounges in Pretoria and in international airports at OR Tambo, King Shaka and Cape Town.

The budget allocation for Programme 4: Public Diplomacy and Protocol Services has **increased from R292.8 million in 2019/20 to R338.6 million in 2020/21.**

* + 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.

**Objectives**

 Promote multilateral activities that enhance South Africa’s economic and diplomatic relations within the continent and with the world by:

o Providing for South Africa’s annual contributions for membership to international organisations, such as the United Nations, the AU and the SADC.

o Providing annual transfers to recapitalise the African Renaissance and International Cooperation Fund as a contribution to its operations.

**Sub-programmes**

 **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[[6]](#footnote-7), the spending focus for Programme 5 over the medium term would be on making transfers to the public entity and timeous payment of South Africa’s membership fees to international organisations.

The budget allocation for Programme 5: International Transfers **increases by R48.4 million from R871.1 million in 2019/20 to R904 million in 2020/21.** This allocation is affected 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. The strategic function of the ARF is to leverage South Africa’s influence, as a ‘soft power’ tool, in pursuance of its Foreign Policy. This would include promotion of democracy and good governance, the prevention and resolution of conflicts, socioeconomic development and integration, humanitarian assistance and human resource development and consolidate peace and reconstruction in Africa.Countries in need of assistance apply for funding from the fund. 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 DirectorGeneral. The ARF’s activities were administered and managed by an advisory committee, which would comprise representatives from the Department and National Treasury. This advisory 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. There were processes to refer the Partnership Fund for Development Bill back to Cabinet. 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 entity’s total budget allocation for financial year 2020/21 is **R R50.8 million.**

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

15.1 With regards to the repatriation of South Africans from across the globe, there was appreciation to the Minister for her notable efforts.

15.2 It was observed that the Strategic Plans and Annual Performance Plans of the Department and its entity, the ARF, were prepared long before the COVID-19 situation. As a result, the Department would have to revise its plans and there would also be some budget adjustments.

15.3 There is a noted improvement to the Department’s and the ARF’s plans. They are user-friendly, can be measured and are quantifiable. This is a huge departure from the previous numerical planning and reporting.

15.4 The Annual Performance Plan of the Department is presented from a baseline of fiscal constraints, recurring qualified audit outcomes; outdated ICT; exchange fluctuations; review organizational structure; implement effective financial management; shortfall on compensation of employees; and with discussions regarding the review of its global footprint.

15.5 The prevalence of COVID-19 and its related restrictions are a real risk to service delivery of the Department, as its mandate is largely implemented abroad. However, the Department could be able to identify areas from which it could have a saving in its activities.

15.6 There was concern about South Africans who want to be transported back to the countries they were repatriated from at the expense of South African government. It was noted that they should pay for their own travel back to those countries. An observation was made that the Department’s website was not regularly updated.

15.7 The Department would pursue candidature diplomacy and identify strategic international organisations to support candidatures in strategic positions.

15.8 The Department would review and identify which international organisations membership to pursue.

15.9 The African Union chairship strategy would be developed and implemented.

15.10 The structured bilateral mechanisms would be reviewed to align them to the MTSF and NDP.

15.11 The Department would develop reports on:

* South Africa’s implementation of international obligations borne out of international agreements
* Regional integration reflecting on South Africa’s contribution to peace, stability, good governance and democracy and on the implementation of the SADC’s Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan.
* Outcomes of high level visits and how they align to MTSF and NDP.
* South Africa’s contribution to the operationalisation of identified Agenda 2063 flagship projects

15.12 The Department undertook to effectively implement the White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disability.

15.13 Consultations would be held with stakeholders on the implementation of the Foreign Service Bill, regarding regulations, codes, directives, to enable the implementation of the Bill.

15.14 A Ministerial task team is working on the challenges regarding the obsolete ICT systems of the Department, with the aim of recommending a holistic approach to modernisation of the ICT infrastructure.

15.15 An outreach initiative is planned to support gender mainstreaming, job shadowing, youth and people with disability.

15.16 The Department would develop, implement and monitor the effectiveness of a Public Diplomacy strategy, to ensure effective communication of South Africa’s Foreign Policy.

15.17 It was noted that the Diplomatic Academy was to be turned into a centre of excellence. It is aimed to offer diplomatic training for South African diplomats and also officers from other departments. The academy would also be open to train diplomats from the SADC region.

15.18 It was noted with concern that the Department has been blamed for pulling the plug on Qatar Airways, allegedly frustrating it from repatriating South Africans abroad. It was further noted that the Department should not be blamed for this. It was also hoped that South African government would still be able to repatriate the rest of South Africans in distress aboard.

15.19 More clarity was sought on whether passengers pay for their own repatriation costs, how the monies were collected, and whether some costs for the repatriation flights were sponsorship from SASOL.

15.20 It was observed that the post-COVID-19 global world is going to be different to institutions of multilateralism and international governance. There was expectation for the Department to provide strategic leadership to contextualise this new normal and show how South Africa was going adapt.

15.21 There was concern that DENEL was reported selling arms to belligerents in Syria. This was seen as creating a reputational issue for South Africa particularly at multilateral level. More information was requested on whether the arms used in the conflict it itself.

15.22 It was raised as a concern that the Department did not indicate the demographic breakdown of the Human Resource that supports the Department’s vision, in particular focus should be on gender and youth.

15.23 More information was sought on whether the insurgency attacks in Mozambique had been categorised and classified as international terrorism, if not what would be the reason. Clarity was sought on how the UN Counter Terrorism structure looked like, and how many countries belonged to the structure.

15.24 In view of the budget reduction which face the Department and indeed all government departments because of the COVID-19 pandemic, clarity was sought as to which missions have been identified for shutdown or downgrade and how far the process was.

15.25 More information was sought on whether the Department’s ICT system would be revamped or totally replaced, as it is regarded as obsolete.

15.26 It was reported that there was an allocation of R8 million towards the Foreign Policy Review Panel. More information was sought on the analysis done to date, and whether it predicted changes that would happen post Covid-19 in relation to South Africa’s Foreign Policy.

15.27 It was further noted that prior to COVID-19, the African Development Bank has predicted an economic growth of 3.9% in Africa. More insight on economic growth would be needed after the pandemic, and the Department should show how it would affect economic growth of South Africa.

15.28 SADC countries also issued COVID-19 regulations. It was asked whether these measures were coordinated within the region to fight the pandemic.

15.29 With regards to elections in the continent, it was asked whether the African Task Force for Corona Virus looked at how it would minimise the spread of the virus during these elections.

15.30 Clarity was sought on the processes towards establishing the African University of Technology.

15.31 It was noted that the Foreign Service Bill was before the President for assent.The Department was asked on its the state of readiness to develop regulations, codes, and directives, needed for the immediate implementation of the Bill.

15.32 In this regard, more information was also sought on the Department’s state of readiness to assume the custodianship of state-owned properties abroad. Skills in property management and strict adherence to supply chain management were regarded as essential. The Department was asked to submit a current breakdown of personnel, qualifications and skills to enable it perform the function of property management.

15.33 More information was sought on the plans of the Department towards the provision of the headquarters for the Pan African Parliament, especially whether the sod-turning ceremony planned for the end of the year would still take place, taking into account the lockdown restrictions.

15.34 The Committee highlighted the need for a comprehensive briefing by the Department on the long-term strategy for South Africa’s candidatures and review of membership to international organisations.

15.35 It was noted with appreciation that in its spending, the African Renaissance Fund also prioritised elections in the African Continent.

15.36 The Department was requested to provide the Committee with an implementation action plan of its programmes with time frames and people responsible. This would enable the Committee to better follow and conduct its oversight.

15.37 It was noted that on 2 December 2009, Cabinet took a decision for the creation of a South African Development Partnership Agency (SADPA). Clarity was sought on the timeframes for repealing the African Renaissance Fund Act. It was noted that the Department has consistently planned to effect the migration to SADPA, however this process has not come to fruition. The Department was asked to clarify if it still had intentions of implementing the Cabinet decision to establish SADPA so that the matter could be put to rest.

15.38 It was noted that the Department would mainstream women, peace and security agenda in all aspects of its work domestically, in the region, the continent and the world.

15.39 The following questions were asked, in relation to page 82, paragraph 8 of the Annual Performance Plan of the Department, to which the Department was to respond in writing:

Is the Department’s property management unit appropriately configured to deal with the responsibilities for property management value chain? Also give the breakdown of the personnel, their qualifications and skills.

The questions went further to find out whether the Department has personnel with the following skills: real estate management, property evaluations, quantity surveyors, project management, if not, the Department should show how it is planning to deal with state owned properties abroad. When is the Department reviewing its property management strategy to be in-line with the new mandate provided in the Bill? What is the Department doing to prepare for the implementation of the section of the Bill that speaks to property? The pilot project in New York has demonstrated some ground work ought to have been done by the Department.

1. **Responses by the Department**

16.1 With regards to SADPA, indeed there was a Cabinet decision and a draft South African Development Partnership Bill was referred back to the Department by the Cabinet, in order to allow engagement between the Department and National Treasury on some elements in the Bill. The Bill would to be submitted back to Cabinet and thereafter undergo processes which include bringing it Parliament. It was noted that SADPA was created as a component in anticipation of the repeal of the African Renaissance Fund.

16.2 The Department was in the process of reviewing its organisational structure. The end-product would be shared with the Portfolio Committee at the appropriate time.

16.3 With regards to employment equity in the Department, it admitted that it might not have done justice to address it. The Department made a commitment to report back to the Committee on progress.

16.4 With regards to ICT, there was a Ministerial task team that was reviewing the ICT infrastructure in the Department. The next step would be to embark upon refreshing the server environment.In the meantime, the Department is in the process of acquiring new desk tops and laptops. It was also noted that a digital transformational strategy would be developed, and a fully automated system would be put in place. The Department undertook to report on progress on a quarterly basis.

16.5 Training of personnel in the Department would be in line with the performance development plans (PDPs) of staff members.

16.6 On the issue of property management state of readiness, the Department made a commitment to respond to the Committee in writing.

16.7 Concerning the repatriation flights and sponsorship, the Department assured the Committee that it did not, at any point, collect any money from those to be repatriated, nor paid for anyone for repatriation. The Department made a commitment that a full report would be made available to the Committee once the repatriation process is over.

16.8 It was noted that indeed the post COVID-19 situation would affect the current Annual Performance Plans and the Strategic Plans of the Department and the African Renaissance Fund. However, in the revised process, which the National Treasury was already embarked on, changes would be highlighted and the Committee would be provided with a revised budget and reprioritised undertakings.

16.9 Regarding the matter on Qatar Airways, it was clarified that the Department was not the one to provide flight clearances required. It was further explained that Qatar Airways wanted to also board non-South Africans on the flight and South Africa could not agree to that. However, once it was established that the flight was with South Africans only, it was allowed to come to South Africa. The lockdown regulations prohibit commercial flights.

16.10 South Africa would not refuse South Africans wishing to leave, provided the country they would be going to would accept them.

16.11 On the matter of reduction of South African missions, the Department explained that there was a discussion in that direction. However, there was no concrete plan as yet. At a stage when Cabinet has attended to the matter, the Portfolio Committee would be briefed.

16.12 The outcome of the work of the Panel on the review of Foreign Policy was still at a discussion level.

16.13 The insurgency situation in Mozambique has been noted by the African Union and the United Nations, however it has not been labelled as yet. There was a definite movement of insurgency around the area. The SADC Troika met in Harare in early April to discuss the security concern.

16.14 SADC leaders have been engaging closely on the responses to COVID-19. The leaders even requested that the region should not suffer due to South Africa’s lockdown. As a result of these discussions, South Africa decided not to temper with the flow of exports of essential commodities to the neighbouring countries.

16.15 On elections in the continent, the practice of social distancing has been insisted upon in the countries where there are elections.

16.16 With regards to the Pan African University, the university is arranged in terms of different faculties across the continent. South Africa has been awarded the space science faculty. It is located at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology as the host and there is collaboration with other universities. Other faculties are located in countries in West Africa and East Africa. It was noted that it would not be appropriate to build one Pan African University in one country. It would defeat the principle of Africanism that was sought to be pursued at the intellectual level.

16.17 With regards to the building of the Pan African Parliament, the Minister was in constant communication with the Minister of Public Works since the beginning of March this year. The matter was receiving urgent attention. It was noted that there was a challenge in identifying appropriate land due to environmental concerns.

16.18 As the AU Chair, consultations towards a mediated process in Libya have commenced. South Africa’s approach on the conflict in Libya would be to create an all-inclusive mediation process which would allow greater participation of the Libyan people in shaping their destiny. A great appetite for the mediation process has been displayed by the Libyan people. The same approach would be adopted in addressing the conflict in the Central African Republic. In Lesotho, a Special Envoy managed to create an environment for a peaceful transition in government. A new Prime Minister has been sworn in.

16.19 The Department has since submitted the written responses to the Portfolio Committee questions as requested.

1. **Conclusions**

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

The Department has received an increased budget for financial year 2020/21. 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.

The situation with COVID-19 has meant that like other departments, this Department would have to work with an adjusted budget and reprioritised targets. The mandate of the Department is largely abroad, most of the activities it had planned would be severely impacted upon as there would be no travel due to the travel restrictions and lockdowns in many countries.

The other side of the coin is that this negative situation may yield positive results relating to the budget of the Department. It could mean that there would be savings in areas such as goods and services due to limitations on travel and the engagements of other non-essential services.

However, the Committee was encouraged by the Department’s commitment and resolve to achieve its strategic objectives albeit with a budget to be readjusted. Graduation from the qualified 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 with 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 woulddraw inspiration from its predecessors and lead a robust oversight over the activities of the Department, South Africa’s Missions abroad and the entity, the African Renaissance Fund. The Committee wouldengage in various issues aimed at enhancing the conduct of South Africa’s foreign policy. It would engage 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, and in the conduct of economic diplomacy by Missions abroad, among other important issues.

The Committee would continue to make 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 responded positively and walked this road benefitting from guidance from the Committee.

The Committee, has noted improvements in the crafting of targets and objectives of the Department. Therefore, it would be manageable for the Committee to 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 theStrategic Plan 2020-2025.

1. **The Committee’s recommendations**

Having considered theStrategic Plan 2020-2025 and the Budget Vote 6 of the Department 2020/21 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. Assessing the effect of COVID-19 related circumstances on the budget allocation and predetermined objectives, and its direct impact on service delivery.
  2. Providing an implementation action plan of the Department’s programmes for related oversight planning.
  3. Identifying areas where savings can be realised due to the restrictions brought about by COVID-19.
  4. Closely monitoring and reporting on South Africa’s progress on the implementation of the SADC’s Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP).
  5. Reporting on South Africa’s participation in the United Nations systems to advance the reform of the UN Security Council.
  6. Mainstreaming the agenda on women, peace and security in all aspects of the Department’s work and reporting on the impact of the policy in peacebuilding and sustaining peace.
  7. Strengthening coordination mechanisms on issues of global governance with other departments to curb conflicting foreign policy messages.
  8. Ensuring a clearly differentiated narrative between a public diplomacy strategy as a policy and a communication strategy which focuses on the how messages are conveyed.
  9. Developing an implementation plan to address recurring qualified audits, outdated ICT systems, shortfall on compensation of employees and foreign exchange fluctuations.
  10. Conducting evaluation on the conditions of all state owned properties in Europe and elsewhere, that are more than 50 years old, to determine their future holding and use. In Europe they are situated in London United Kingdom), Paris (France), Vienna (Austria), Rome (Italy), Brussels (Belgium) and Copenhagen (Denmark).
  11. Pursuing and reporting on gains in candidature diplomacy to ensure targeted influence on decisions and policies of strategic international organisations.
  12. Ensuring that the discussions on the reduction of South Africa’s missions abroad recognises the centrality of Africa in South Africa’s Foreign Policy.
  13. Reviewing and reporting on which international organisations South Africa would maintain membership and why.
  14. Reviewing structured bilateral mechanisms to ensure mutually beneficial collaborations that would address domestic challenges.
  15. Reporting on the assessment of South Africa’s level of implementation of international obligations borne out of international agreements.
  16. Assessing and reporting on the impact of implementing the White Paper on the Rights of Persons with disability.
  17. Ensuring the state of readiness of the Department for the full and immediate implementation of the Foreign Service Bill once assented to.
  18. Ensuring the state of readiness to assume custodianship of all state owned properties abroad in terms of the Foreign Service Bill.
  19. Consulting with Minister of Public Works and fast tracking the processes for the provision of a headquarters for the Pan African Parliament.
  20. Ensuring that the Diplomatic Academy meets the criteria in the Foreign Service Bill in order for it to fully implement its mandate.
  21. Finalising legislative processes towards the South African Development Partnership Billintended to repeal African Renaissance and International Cooperation Fund (ARF).
  22. Clarifying the nature of South African Development Partnership Agency as a component, vis-a-vis the Cabinet decision of 2 December 2009.

**To the National Assembly**

18.23 The Parliamentary Oversight Model must be reviewed to allow the Portfolio Committee on International Relations and Cooperation to have more regular oversight visits to South African Missions abroad, in order to have a holistic approach on the performance abroad of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation.

18.24 The Parliamentary Oversight Model should allow the Portfolio Committee on International Relations and Cooperation to have more regular oversight visits to project areas of the African Renaissance and International Cooperation Fund (ARF), in order to have a holistic approach on the performance abroad of the entity of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation.

18.25 The Portfolio Committee should be allowed to conduct oversight visits to international organisations that the Republic of South Africa is a state-party. This would enable the Committee to assess the impact of the Department’s participation on the overall outcomes at such forums.

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

Report to be considered.

**Sources and references**

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7. State of the Nation Address, February and June 2020
8. The National Development Plan 2030: Chapter 7
9. Government’s Medium Term Strategic Framework 2019-2024
10. Priority 7 of Government’s Medium Term Strategic Framework 2019-2024

1. Annual Performance Plan 2020/21, Department of International Relations and Cooperation [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. National Development Plan 2030, Chapter 7 thereof [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Annual Performance Plan 2020/21 of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Strategic Plan 2020-2025, Department of International Relations and Cooperation [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. African Renaissance Fund APP 2020-2021 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. Estimates of National Expenditure 2020 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)