**UNREVISED HANSARD**

**MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY WEDNESDAY, 10 MAY 2023**

**VOTE NO 6 – INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND COOPERATION**

***PROCEEDINGS OF HYBRID MINIPLENARY– GOOD HOPE CHAMBER***

Members of the mini-plenary session met at Good Hope Chamber at 15:00.

House Chairperson Mr M L D Ntombela took the Chair and requested members to observe a moment of silence for prayer or meditation.

**APPROPRIATION BILL**

Debate on Vote No 6 – International Relations and Co- operation:

The MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CO-OPERATION:

Chairperson, and good afternoon to all hon members. Allow me to recognise our Deputy Minister Mashego-Dlamini and Deputy Minister Botes, the Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee, Mahumapelo, hon members of the Portfolio Committee, colleagues from the executive joining us, hon members and guests, good

afternoon and welcome to this debate on the 2022-23 work of the Department of International Relations and Co-operation and the budget for the new 2023-24 financial year.

We are fortunate to have been given an opportunity to have our debate on such an important day. Twenty-nine years ago, on May 10, 1994, South Africans participated in the inauguration of the very first democratically elected President of South Africa, President Nelson Mandela. From that day South Africa took on the mantle of Mandela in the practice of international relations, which is to seek peace, justice, and equality wherever we may have a chance to make a difference.

The past financial year proved to be a tumultuous year for international relations. We had thought that COVID-19 had put us through the most difficult time, but the conflict in Europe has introduced more difficulties for all of us who work in international relations.

Despite the many complicated challenges, our department continued its focus on our core tasks. These are to strengthen bilateral relations, play an effective role in multilateral institutions, provide services to our citizens abroad and

support our government in achieving the objectives of inclusive growth, peace and development in South Africa, Africa and the world. The past year has seen a significant expansion in the bilateral work of the Minister, the Deputy Ministers, and our officials, as well as a very active international diary for President Ramaphosa.

On the budget, we are pleased to report on our budget in this debate. The department’s budget allocation for 2023-24 has increased from R6,8 billion in 2022-23 to R6,9 billion for this financial year. This is a modest increase of 1%. The increase is largely for compensation of employees which increased by 5% from R3 billion in the past financial year, to R3,2 billion in this financial year. The increase will allow the department to fill critical vacant positions. The goods and services budget has also been increased by 4% to

R2,5 billion rand in this financial year. This welcome support will enhance our ability to implement our key programmes and improve the work of all our missions.

You may recall that last year we undertook to increasingly focus on economic diplomacy in the department and our missions. Our missions have been playing a leading role in

assisting our government in all spheres in their international co-operation efforts. A specific area of progress has been to provide government and the Presidency economic diplomacy assistance for growing foreign direct investment into South Africa. We have made economic diplomacy a critical aspect of our mission work, and we are very pleased at the continuing interest many companies have shown in South Africa as an investment destination. I have held meetings with businesspeople in various countries, and many want to know more about South Africa and plan to establish new interests in our country. The work all our teams have done has produced very positive results and will continue to do so. I wish to thank our embassy teams for some really excellent work, particularly our heads of mission.

The past financial year continued government’s success in increasing foreign direct investment into our country, particularly through the annual Presidential Investment Conference. We are pleased that our missions working closely in partnership with the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition, have succeeded in achieving the goal of

R1,4 trillion in investment commitments South Africa. We will continue to support this work led by President Ramaphosa.

I now turn to our geopolitical environment. Our world has become increasingly fractured and complex. Relations in the globe are strained, worryingly divided, and diverted from the development goals we all committed to with the Sustainable development goals. The most powerful economies are in a fractious trade conflict that threatens all the smaller economies of the world. There is armed conflict between Russia and Ukraine, and there are insufficient voices calling for peace or working to create a stable peaceful environment.

The poor and marginalised are facing the greatest threat in that their plight is forgotten while the mighty fight. The result has been increased economic risks for the most vulnerable, low growth levels in much of the globe, and neglect of those in the greatest need. Food inflation and high energy prices have strained incomes and resulted in high debt costs and persistent uncertainty. This is not the world many hoped for when the Cold War ended. As the Department of International Relations and Co-operation, we have urged a return to peace, to multilateralism, and to partnerships for development. Our department has made great efforts to remain focussed on our primary objectives. We have strengthened partnerships, and promoted peace and security in the region,

Southern African Development Community, SADC, on the continent of Africa and indeed globally.

On peace and security, just last year we concluded our term as chair of the SADC Organ on Peace, Defence and Security. South Africa led the efforts to activate and support the deployment of a mission in Mozambique and engaged with Eswatini to encourage efforts to establish national unity in that country. President Ramaphosa also concluded his assignment of the SADC facilitation process in Lesotho and tabled his final report to the SADC summit last August. Lesotho held successful elections last year and is actively implementing the reform agenda adopted by the National Reforms Authority.

We remain concerned about the war between Russia and Ukraine and want to encourage all parties involved to find a route to peace. We are convinced that negotiations are imperative for ending this terrible strife and continue to urge attention to diplomacy. We as South Africa will be serving in the AU Peace and Security Council for the next two years, and we hope that intensified efforts will be given to finding peace in Sudan, Mali, Libya, Chad, and Burkina Faso.

South-South Co-operation and Brics, one of the ways in which a context of global collaboration could be advanced is through establishing influential formations that will work with the United Nations to advance an inclusive forward looking international development agenda. It is possible for Brics to play such a transformative role. South Africa is serving as Chair of Brics for 2023, and we hope the Brics leaders can assume a stronger role in bringing peace to Ukraine and Russia. We welcome the efforts of President Xi Jinping and those promised by President Lula da Silva.

Brics has attracted great interest from a number of countries, and our Sherpas are engaged in conceptualising how Brics could respond to such interest. It is vital to ensure that what is eventually agreed strengthens multilateralism, the United Nations and our Non-Aligned Movement. We hope our leaders will provide definitive guidelines at the conclusion of the Brics Summit. The growing interest in Brics indicates that many countries are searching for a multipolar forum that is modern, inclusive and oriented toward the good of all.

Our Brics theme is, “Brics and Africa: Partnership for Mutually Accelerated Growth, Sustainable Development, and

Inclusive Multilateralism.” Brics is our partnership of emerging economies and developing countries that wish to play a role in world affairs, ensuring benefit to the global South. We are encouraged by the growth and resilience of the New Development Bank of Brics and welcome the new members. The bank has assisted members to secure funding to address infrastructure needs, support the unblocking of regional value chains and localisation of production capacity.

Our partnership with Brics has resulted in tangible benefits for our country in a wide range of sectors. Total trade with Brics countries has increased from R487 billion in 2017 to R702 billion in 2021. We have received funding of over

US$5 billion from the New Development Bank for key infrastructure projects in renewable energy, water resources and other sectors.

Our priorities for Brics this year as chair are to develop a partnership towards an equitable just transition; to transform education and skills development for the future; to unlock opportunities through the African Continental Free Trade Area, strengthen post-pandemic economic recovery and strengthen multilateralism. Our Brics countries support a strong

multilateral system and reform of the United Nations Security Council. Our target this year is to ensure increased strengthening of Brics, and of course the hosting of a successful summit by us South Africa in August this year.

We have remained focused on the vision of peace set out by former President Mandela throughout his lifetime. We have committed to playing a full role in resolving international challenges and helping countries achieve peace and security. Working through the African Renaissance Fund we will support reconstruction efforts in Cabo Delgado in Mozambique. We will use our three years in the UN Human Rights Council to promote peace and full enjoyment of human rights for all people. We will also continue work to realise the bold anti-racism initiatives of the Durban Declaration and Plan of Action that was adopted at the Anti-Racism Conference over 20 years ago. We will as South Africa continue to argue for reform of the Security Council and for a greater focus on the values and principles enshrined in the UN Charter.

Our focus on Brics will be implemented alongside continued work to retain and strengthen links with the whole African continent, with Europe, with the United States, with East Asia

as well as with the Middle East. All these are important trading partners for South Africa and they cannot be neglected.

We are pleased that from this year the Non-Aligned Movement – our Nam, will be chaired by Uganda. We will work closely with our sister country to strengthen Non-Aligned Movement, and we congratulate Azerbaijan for the leadership they have provided to Nam when serving as chair.

We will continue our participation in the G20 and consistently profile the interests of South Africa and Africa. We are pleased that the G20 has agreed with us and the African Union, AU, that the AU must be a permanent presence at the G20. And we look forward to working closely with the AU to profile our development agenda. We believe more attention should be given to addressing post-COVID-19 liquidity challenges on the continent and call on the G20 to do more to assist.

It is worrying that the conflict in Ukraine has diminished world attention from challenges in Africa and has left the marginalised even more vulnerable to the dangers of terrorism, food insecurity, climate change and instability. Developing

countries need a G20 focused on issues of development. The G20 should actively encourage wealthy G7 member states to honour their financial commitments to supporting developing countries in mitigation and adaptation in response to climate change.

They should also play a leading role in entrenching peace and security globally.

Last year our commitment to peaceful resolution of conflicts was visibly illustrated in our country’s support for peace in Ethiopia. South Africa was honoured to host the Pretoria peace talks, as they are now called in Ethiopia. We thank the people of Ethiopia for trusting us, and we thank the facilitators and international partners for the wonderful work that they did.

President Obasanjo displayed incredible leadership, ably supported by President Uhuru Kenyatta and former Deputy President Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka - our own.

South Africa will continue to support peace efforts and the entrenchment of human rights in the globe. We are grateful to have been elected to the UN Human Rights Council and will be pursuing a human rights agenda there. That agenda will support our established and new global solidarity efforts. We will continue our support for a two-state solution for Israel and

Palestine. We know much has been done to make this improbable, but we must never give up – we must continue all efforts for peace and freedom for the people of Palestine and Israel and the people of Western Sahara, and continue our solidarity with the blockaded people of Cuba. We must also improve our solidarity with South Sudan, Mali, Libya and Chad. We are still in the middle of the UN Nelson Mandela Decade of Peace declared from 2019 to 2028, and as the inheritors of the legacy of President Nelson Mandela, we all have a duty to be activists for peace on our continent and worldwide.

Our focus on human rights must also be active in seeking full enjoyment of equality and justice for the women of Afghanistan. The South cannot be silent when girl children and women are denied rights that we regard as fundamental to our humanity. I wish to thank the people of South Africa for their generous solidarity for the people of Turkey and Syria when they were struck by tragedy. Colleagues from both countries have expressed their gratitude to our rescue workers, to NGOs such as our Gift of the Givers Foundation, the SAPS K9 unit, Medi Response, South Africa Search and Rescue Organisation, businesspeople, as well as many thousands of ordinary South

Africans who held out a helping hand. We must do the same for the DRC and Malawi as they have faced devastating floods.

It is this spirit of South Africa that has caused us to develop a forward-looking agenda and programme for the new financial year that we are in. We will of course focus on Brics, and we will focus on peace and security worldwide, particularly through our membership of the AU Peace and Security Council. We will continue robust bilateral links as shown in President Ramaphosa hosting Belgium, Namibia, Finland, Uganda and other heads of state this year. We will also continue our strong advocacy for implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area as a critical lever for the economic transformation of Africa. We will work with SADC to implement our regional development agenda and continue our support for progress in achieving the goals of our Agenda 2063.

With respect to our work in Parliament, I hope we will submit the SA Development Partnership Agency Bill to Parliament as we must transform the African Renaissance Fund to play a more significant strategic role on our continent and elsewhere. Our agenda and plans require increased resourcing. We are

increasingly constrained by our budget even as our work grows. We have seen this expanded role in the incredible work being done by our State Protocol and consular services branch. They render nonfinancial assistance to our citizens abroad.

In the past financial year, consular services assisted 118 citizens in distress, assisted with extradition requests, assisted with the repatriation of mortal remains of 193 deceased, and assisted persons in correctional services abroad. They also authenticated over 50 000 legal documents and repatriated our stranded citizens and other nationals from Sudan. No country can exercise international influence by penny pinching. We are Brics chair this year and must showcase our country. We will be G20 chair in 2025, and we intend on hosting a successful G20 and must have the resources to do that.

Of course, I am fully alert to the challenges facing government and confirm the Department of International Relations and Co-operation’s commitment to help find ways to grow our economy, to create prosperity and support the achievement of a better Africa and world through our robust international partnerships and global co-operation.

I wish to conclude by thanking our Deputy Ministers for their sterling work, our President for his support for our work, our team - the Department of International Relations and Co- operation and particularly the Director-General Dangor, our deputy directors-general and all officials in our department. It is a real pleasure to work with the officials of the Department of International Relations and Co-operation. I also wish to thank hon members of the portfolio committee, even the hon Chetty for the work they do in the domain of diplomacy and foreign relations. Because hon Chetty, you the hon Bergman and the hon Msani are constant reminders like what Socrates referred to – that buzzes in your ear and reminds you of what you need to do. And I thank them for the work that they do.

Thank you very much, hon members. I look forward to listening to your views in the debate. Thank you.

Mr S O R MAHUMAPELO**:** The Presiding Chairperson, Comrade Minister, Naledi Pandor and Deputy Ministers, Botes and Masego Dlamini, hon members and the South Africans that are following the debate on various platforms provided by Parliament. As part of our constitutional mandate as the portfolio committee to do oversight on the Executive, we met, engaged, and in the

end, agreed that we must approve the budgets of both the department and Renaissance Fund.

We took note as the portfolio committee on the slight increase of the budget to R6,9 billion. Having accomplished this collective mandate as the portfolio committee, we then agreed to proceed to say to the House that, the budget will have to be approved. Hon members, please be reminded that, the struggle to build a better Africa and a better world, is pursued under conditions of neither our choice nor making. The international government system finds itself at a critical juncture, where all nations have to carefully interrogate their policies and determine what they aspire to pursue and accomplish for the benefit of their citizens.

That is why it is critical for all of us not only to understand but internalise the objective realities imposed on the rest of humanity, by the global geopolitical situations. These geopolitical situations compels the department to adopt nondogmatic, but principled approaches, whose objectives are embedded in our perpetual responsibility to prioritise our interest as a nation first. This we do, fully cognisant of the objective realities, which are among other things includes the

truth that, our interest as a country are fully embedded and intertwined with the interests of the other countries of the world.

The intertwined character of our interest as South Africa, become more expressly embedded when it comes to those counties that were with us in the trenches of struggle for the triumph of the people’s revolution over colonialism and apartheid.

These are indeed our true friends. As a committee, we are encouraged by the department’s commitment and practise towards the African agenda, anchored among other things on the advancement of the African Continental Free Trade Area, AfCFTA, and the African Union Agenda 2063. Linked to this, we are pleased that the necessary prioritisation of the Southern African Development Community, SADC, for our drive on regional development and integration, will continue.

Hon members, we are on the same wave length with the department, on its posture to the effect that South Africa’s interest at a global level, must remain anchored on our commitment to multilateralism. This is why South Africa should continue to perfect and master the tactical art of the engagements through the United Nations, UN, and all its

ancillary bodies. On the same breath, Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, BRICS, Summit, planned for August this year, will also be used to advance the common course of the African continent.

Our commitment as South Africa to multilateralism, shall continue to, not only to reflect our strategic interests, but also our aspirations and values. Our collective aspirations as a nation are not only limited to economic prosperity, they include the necessary reform of the global order, where certain issues that are unresolved for many decades stands a chance to be resolved. At the same time, we are fully cognisant of the objective reality that, those who chose to enslave, to oppress, to exploit, to maim, to throttle and alienate us as Africans and blacks, are compelled by the same circumstances imposed on us, to have a reciprocative relationship with us, especially on the economic realities of the world.

That is why, as the ANC, we shall never lose patience of explaining the just course of the struggle of the evil of Palestine and Western Sahara. It is our sincere hope that, the current leaders of the world shall be quived to future

generations, as a fully conflict free world in order for prosperity for all to prevail. We applaud Minister Naledi Pandor and her team, for continuing to propagate the call for peaceful settlement of all conflicts based on our objectively principled nonaligned position of South Africa, of all platforms of global governance.

Included in this, is the *North Atlantic Treaty Organisation,* NATO, supported conflict between Russia and Ukraine. We commend the department for playing a major role in the resolution of tensions, conflicts and disagreements in Ethiopia, under the auspices of the African Union, AU. The successful repatriation from Sudan of the South Africans and other nations as done by the department, is something we fully commend. The Presidency has established an interministerial committee, to provide a necessary political illumination and a guidance on the correct, and I will read it slow, on the correct, legal, moral and political approach to be followed regarding among other things, the domestication of the Roman statues.

We stand ready to support the expected progressive outcome, because we cannot afford the anti-BRICS, Afrophobic and Afro-

pessimists, who determine our destiny and defocus us, by wanting to impose the responsibility of arresting President Putin on us. Because we are a people anchored on a rule of law, this important task will be done in line with the

Diplomatic Immunities and Privileges Act 37 of 2001 and all other law. As a nation under the leadership, we are

unashamedly relentless in our pursuit of united, democratic,

nonracial, nonsexist and a prosperous society.

As President Oliver Tambo said: “The fight for freedom must go on until it is won; until our country is free and happy and

peaceful as part of the community of man, we cannot rest.” It is in this context, hon Chairperson and hon members, of what

President Tambo said, that the committee will spare no breath in continuing to ask the questions. If our exports according

to SA Revenue Service, Sars, are at R192 billion as at March

2023, what percentage of this belong to the blacks in general and the Africans in particular? If the Foreign Direct

Investment as set by the SA Reserve Bank are at R67 billion as at the fourth quarter of 2022, how much of this belongs to the blacks in general and the Africans in particular?

I am saying this because, our struggle has always been for the liberation of blacks in general and Africans in particular. We want to call on all South Africans to ensure that, as we debate and as we engage as a nation in all the challenges that we face, we do not forget that, South Africa belongs to all who lives in it, black and white. Also, that we have a responsibility as a preamble of the Constitution of the Republic says, to address the injustices of our past. The struggle continues.

*Setswana*:

Ke a leboga.

Ms E L POWELL: House Chairperson, yesterday the hon Minister Naledi Pandor openly told the international community that the Brics nations are now actively working together to challenge the global predominance of values and principles that have been promoted over many decades. What are these values that you now seek to challenge, Minister? Freedom? Justice?

Tolerance? Democracy? In the same breath, the ANC has justified their failure to condemn Russia’s invasion of a sovereign state under the spurious auspices of so-called nonalignment.

Hon members, imagine the international community had refused assistance to this nation under the same auspices during the apartheid regime. You see, the plagues of despotism, genocide, and war are only defeated when democracies work together to preserve a rules-based international order that respects the right to self-determination; the principle of territorial sovereignty and a rules-based international order. Democracy in South Africa was not achieved through the barrel of a gun, and civil war was averted because countries throughout the world who shared our progressive vision worked with us to defeat nationalism, oppression and tyranny. The hypocrisy of the ANC in turning their back on these very values and the global solidarity that helped to ensure South Africa’s freedom, in the first place, from the grips of illegitimate rule is truly staggering.

That a crumbling, former liberation movement which now enjoys less than 50% of the popular support, is willing to abandon South Africa’s commitment to constitutionalism and trade on the fortunes of 60 million people in order to protect an alleged war criminal, is a direct indication of how desperate the ruling party has become to shore up patronage with Moscow. The ANC’s intellectually dishonest rhetoric about neo-

colonialism is transparent and needs to be called out. Cadres like to come up here and talk to us about the global South being underdeveloped because of raw material and mineral resource exploitation by the West – but the facts tell a different story.

Last year, 36% of South Africa’s exports went to the three main Western markets. Machinery and value-added manufactured goods totalled 31% of South Africa’s exports to the US, whereas a much higher percentage of raw materials were exported to the Brics countries; 77% of Foreign Direct Investment, FDI, stock into South Africa in recent years came from the EU, UK and the US. China and Russia account for a mere 6,2%. Russia currently accounts for as little as 0.3% of South Africa’s trade ties. We do not even have a trade agreement with the Brics states and trade ties with the West worth R400 billion are now at risk.

Let’s also put to bed the myth that somehow the ANC owe a particular debt of gratitude to Russia for assistance provided during the struggle. This is a whitewash of history. The fact is that whilst Soviet Russia provided assistance to the ANC, so did Soviet Ukraine. More than 328 Umkhonto Wesizwe fighters

were trained at Odesa in Soviet Ukraine between 1963 and 1965, including ex-ANC Minister Ronnie Kasrils. For many years, the world has watched the direction in which the ANC is taking this nation with increasing disbelief. South Africa now faces the real risk of being expelled from its single most important trade partnership, the African Growth and Opportunity Act, Agoa, all because the ANC wants to bend to the will of a Kremlin warmonger and protect donations that are being channelled to your party by Russian oligarchs. As the ANC continues to squander any last remaining goodwill of the international community, constitutionalists at the highest levels of the government are no longer willing to stand back. Let me tell you, Minister Pandor, you have got high-ranking officials in your department who are now willing to move against you in order to do what is good and right for the future of this country. The DA will not stand back.

Ms T P MSANE: Chairperson ... [Interjections.] ...

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr M L D Ntombela): Order! Order, hon members!

*IsiZulu*:

Nk T P MSANE: ... ngesinye isikhathi u-Google uyahlupha ngoba uyakudukisana.

*English*:

Chairperson, 2023 marks 10 years of unbroken struggle for economic freedom in our lifetime during which the EFF has been calling for the unity of the African continent, from Cape to Cairo, Morocco to Madagascar. It is the EFF and only the EFF that has been calling for one African passport, one currency, one military, and one Africa without the artificial borders that were imposed on us. It's been 10 years in which the EFF has been advocating for the infrastructure of the African continent to be upgraded for the ease of trade amongst African states. Over the past 10 years, the EFF has secured seats in the Namibian Parliament and has had a successful national conference in Liberia and has also an electoral certificate that warrants us to contest elections in Liberia. Ten years of advocating for the unity of African people and yet it's been years since the brutal killing of Elvis Nyathi and xenophobic attacks on fellow African people due to the social ills of the ruling party which caused Africans to fight over breadcrumbs while the real economy is heading to the seas.

As the EFF, we are not amazed that our call for the unity of Africa is deliberately misrepresented because the ruling party has dismally failed to lead and deal with unemployment, crime and increasing violence. It is on this note that we request and recall all progressive forces of the African continent and international forces to fund the revolution by SMSing EFF donation to 42191. We have gathered here again today to debate the budget for a department that has for more than six years failed to build an ... [Interjections.] ...

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr M L D Ntombela): Order! Order, hon members!

Ms T P MSANE: ... African Parliament that was meant to put this country on the world map for hosting the African continent. This department has collapsed the image and pride of South Africa in the eyes of the most important African institution, the African Union and the Pan-African Parliament by failing to deliver permanent housing and permanent building for the Pan-African Parliament. It does not matter how much we emphasise the unity of the African continent, but as a country, we have failed to house the Pan-African Parliament.

This country has opted to make Mr Cyril Ramaphosa’s associates

rich through the monthly rentals for housing the Pan-African Parliament and then to place this country in African history books.

We have ignored the historical responsibility we have towards the reinvigoration and development of the continent. We have abandoned our leadership role in chanting an authentically Pan-Africanist agenda in the continent and we are paying the price for that. Had we had a strong Pan-Africanist voice in the continent, the African continent herself would be able to resolve many crises such as the ongoing war in Sudan; the destabilisation of Eritrea; the conflicts in Ethiopia; the ongoing negative role played by France in African countries that are France’s former colonies. Just next door, we failed to condemn a coup instigated by Mnangagwa and his group of thieves whose only interest was to loot Zimbabwe and not develop her. Mnangagwa is now using his country as his spaza shop while millions of Zimbabweans are starving. We must condemn the doublespeak from the highest political office in this country. Do we continue being members of the International Criminal Court, ICC, or not? Why did Mr Ramaphosa announce that we are withdrawing from the ICC only

for him to change tact a few days later? What is our position on the intensified imperial aspirations of the United States?

At the moment, despite the best efforts of Minister Pandor, South Africa does not have a foreign policy. We move from extreme right to extreme left without ever grounding our pronouncements on solid policy perspectives. Therefore, Chairperson, as the EFF, we reject this Budget Vote.

Mr M HLENGWA: Hon House Chairperson, at the outset one must really want to take this opportunity and thank all the foreign service staff of South Africa who represent and defend this country at all times, even in the most difficult of circumstances. I would also like to thank the Minister and her team for what is very rare in this Parliament which is the ability to respond to questions. I hope that discipline can be migrated to other Ministers. So, Minister, thank you very much and your team for that.

In another capacity, Minister, I think it would be remiss of me if we do not thank you, Deputy Minister Botes and the Director-General, Dangor, for all the assistance you gave in ensuring the appropriate facilitation of President Olusegun

Obasanjo on the occasion of him delivering the first Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi annual lecture in March.

*IsiZulu:*

Siyathokoza kakhulu.

*English:*

House Chairperson, the ongoing global challenges which are prevalent through the invasion of Ukraine by Russia, the Israeli—Palestine conflict, the One-China policy conflict, the conflict in Sudan, and the list is endless, more than anything else, require all of us to be a united force in our collective efforts and our commitment to peace. We must condemn violence wherever it prevails against human rights.

Hon House Chairperson, I would want to start with the financial matters of the department. The Department of International Relations and Co-operation, Dirco’s, financial management is of concern. Their 2021-22 annual report says there is over R800 million in unauthorised expenditure waiting authorisation with no record of any disciplinary steps.

Irregular expenditure is recorded at just over R2 billion,

while fruitless and wasteful expenditure comes in at over R30 million.

The report indicates issues around supply chain management, SCM, procedures and policies not being followed. We also read of three persons placed on precautionary suspensions for an average of 168 days at a cost of almost R2,7 million. This flagrant disregard for the proper stewardship of public funds is unacceptable. The Auditor-General, AG, agrees in stating that the oversight by the accounting officer regarding financial reporting and compliance monitoring was not effective due to an inadequate review of the financial statements and noncompliance not being prevented.

Further, the lack of consequence management in respect of officials that allow or permit noncompliance with laws and regulations to take place results in irregular and fruitless expenditure. So, this must take particular priority in the department. The question then becomes, Minister, what is South Africa’s positions really on anything?

The hon Msane raised a critical question on the issue of the ICC which I think is important to clarify. Does South Africa

continue being a signatory to the Rome Statute or are you pulling out? These questions are important because they are the yardstick measure and benchmark upon which this Parliament can hold you accountable. We need to hold you committed to your own commitments. If those commitments change we must be apprised of them so that we can be in a position to understand the thinking of this government along the lines of its own strategic objectives on the international stage.

Interestingly, South Africa positions itself as an advocate of human rights and peace. Yet, it is a missed opportunity not to be honest with our friends. If Russia wants an amicable solution then the point of departure should be to call out the fact that it is an invasion of Ukraine. It does not take away from you actually arriving at a solution on this matter. So, Minister, really on anything, whilst we have no doubt of your noble intentions and your patriotism and your commitment to the responsibilities at hand — I think you are one of the most hardworking Ministers that we have in this country — but clarity is needed and at this point it is lacking, and when it is lacking it is difficult to know who’s who in the zoo and what’s what in the zoo. Thank you, House Chairperson.

Dr C P MULDER: Hon House Chairperson, hon Minister and Deputy Ministers and hon colleagues, it’s a privilege to participate in this debate on International Relations and Co-operation.

The hon Minister started off by referring to the importance of the date 10 May being 29 years since the inauguration of President Mandela on that day. The two of us were both present at that occasion. You referred to what Mr Mandela set out as one of the core values of his policies of those days or his view, namely, justice, equality and peace. We will come back to that.

I want to specifically focus on Programme 2 International Relations, as almost 50% of the budget, R3,3 billion, is spent in international relations. The budget report stated that the department will continue to pursue increased and improve access to South African products and services to foreign markets, which would contribute to the aim of increasing manufacturing and thereby contribute to an export orientated economy. I think we all agree with that.

Secondly, the department intends to become a catalyst and operate as a networking agent for South Africa incorporated. The missions, in particular, are poised as key frontline role-

players to the pursuit of economic diplomacy and its component pillar such as foreign direct investment pledges as well as contribution towards inbound tourism, etc. The question is, how do we achieve that? How do we get that to materialise?

I had a look again and I remember what was said about Mr Mandela’s foreign policy, and it was described by some, as follows: It could be seen as idealism, importance of moral values and universalism. Further to this he adopted the principle of inveracity and in foreign policy he compasses universal liberal ideas and human rights specifically. That placed South Africa in a unique, respected position to mediate in conflicts around the world. You are respected as a country. The question is, is that still the case?

My concern is that at the moment it seems there is a change in approach in the world in various aspects, specifically by the US, UK, Australia and other countries which we could describe as the west. It seems they are coming with a different approach and they want to counter China’s involvement, specifically initiatives by China to build infrastructure in Africa. The impression that one gets is that they won’t see rhetoric and buzz words such as ‘non-alignment’ on

‘neutrality’ or as you stated today yourself that those relationships with those countries should not be neglected. But they do not see that as sufficient to give us access to their markets and agreements. I think that is a very important and a very sincere concern that we should have.

I listened to your speech very carefully, hon Minister, and you placed a lot of emphasis on BRICS and our involvement in BRICS. You referred to the Russia and Ukraine conflict and saying we are concerned about that conflict, and you think a diplomatic resolution is the case. I think that is correct. You also emphasised the role BRICS could play in the processes going forward and you also mentioned that the theme for BRICS is ‘Brics in Africa’. You referred to the other partners, US and Europe and that they should not be neglected. My concern is that I don’t think that is necessarily enough. I don’t think they would care if we neglected them. Maybe we should be more concerned about that.

If you look at the reality you can see that our exports to the US in 2022 were approximately $10,7 billion — 38 times more than we exported to Russia during that period where we exported $282,85 million. This is a huge difference. If we

continue in that vein we may run the risk of those markets becoming more and more difficult for us.

I was also concerned that in your speech you didn’t refer to the African Growth and Opportunity Act, AGOA, situation at all. I hope the Deputy Minister who was part of the delegation will refer to that. That was the delegation by Sydney Mufamadi, and I think it is relevant. Unless we don’t care or we don’t mind that we are running the risk in terms of US and those kind of experts. That’s just the reality. The fact of the matter is it seems that our emphasis is so much on BRICS and everything surrounding that such that we take the rest for granted. I think that will be a huge mistake. Hopefully the Deputy Minister will inform us on what was done in terms of the Agoa agreement. I think it is essential. To think that we can just accept that will be the case in future ... [Time expired.]

Rev K R J MESHOE: House Chairperson, the ACDP welcomes news of the safe evacuation of all South Africans who were trapped in the war in Sudan. According to the Sudanese army, two of the nation’s neighbours have been supplying the Rapid Support Forces, RSF, rebels with weapons, ammunition, and other goods.

Also, some groups in Ethiopia are reportedly taking advantage of the conflict by trying to retake parts of their common border. Has the Minister and her department verified these reports, and what are they doing to mitigate further attempts to escalate more tension or create another source of conflict?

In 2016 the African Union adopted the Lusaka Road Map to an African Peace by 2020. This was a comprehensive plan which provided for proper funding for the African Standby Force, ways to stop rebel forces from accessing guns and money, and other essentials during times of war. Where is that African Standby Force that is so needed to intervene in the war in Sudan?

In 2018, there was an all-time high number of countries in conflict on our continent. The ACDP is convinced that the AU must develop the political will to stop African wars by confronting both destabilisers of peaceful coexistence and known instigators of wars.

This Department takes great pride in emphasising the centrality of Africa as the focus of South Africa’s foreign policy. It should do more to call for investigations into who

instigates and funds the warring parties, particularly the rebels in these conflicts in the continent. South Africa’s Pan Africanist vision of unity, solidarity and a common African destiny of peace, development and prosperity should be seen to be aggressively leading efforts to hunt down those who are distributing illegal guns on the continent.

Yesterday when the Portfolio Committee on International Relations deliberated on the committee report, concerns were raised about recommendations that the committee tables before this House, yet they seem to be ignored. Some noted that this committee has been rendered useless, as requests for trips to do oversight over the 116 South African missions abroad are mostly turned down. A question was raised on whether the apparent reluctance to allow oversight visits abroad is a way of hiding from the committee the appallingly deteriorated and dilapidated state that some government properties are in.

The suspension and ultimate removal from ... [Time expired.]

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CO-

OPERATION (A Botes): Hon House Chair hon Ntombela, hon Minister of the Department of International Relations Pandor,

Deputy Minister Mashego-Dlamini, portfolio committee chairperson, hon Obakeng Mahumapelo, fellow Members of Parliament, the Director-General of the Department of International Relations, Mr Dangor, South African’s foreign service personnel, and diplomats, South Africa’s foreign policy has an indigenous African identity that is woven into

... [Inaudible.] ... of South Africans ...

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr M L D Ntombela): Hon Deputy Minister, hon Thandi Tobias, please mute. You can continue, hon Deputy Minister.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CO-

OPERATION (Mr A Botes): As I have indicate, our foreign policy has an indigenous African identity that is woven into and inspired by the struggles and aspirations of South Africans.

It is therefore imperative to restate what underpins our foreign policy, substantively outlined by Nelson Mandela, when he said, and I quote:

The temptation in our situation is to speak in muffled tones about an issue such as solidarity. We can easily be enticed to read reconciliation and fairness as meaning

parity between justice and injustice. Having achieved our own freedom, we can fall into the trap of washing our hands of difficulties that others face. Yet we would be less than human if we did so.

South Africa’s first democratically elected President held true to his inaugural oath on 10 May 1994, when he commits South Africans to oppose all that may harm it. Hon members, what constitutes harm to South Africans and what continues to inspire our steadfast solidarity with the oppressed people in the world is that today we mark 75 years since the 1948 mass displacement of Palestinians known as the Nakba or the Palestinian Catastrophe by the state of Israel, we mark 61 years of the 1960 Cuban embargo and economic blockade by the United States of America, and the 48 years since the 1975 of colonial occupation of the land of the Saharawi people by the Kingdom of Morocco.

The White Paper on South Africa’s foreign policy, entitled Building a Better World: The Diplomacy of Ubuntu, contends that: South Africa will work in partnership with countries of the South and the North to address its shared challenges of

underdevelopment, promotion of global equity and social justice.

In my intervention, I will focus on the work that we are doing with countries in the underdeveloped South and the industrialized North to address the shared challenges of underdevelopment, promotion of global equity and social justice, with a particular emphasis on economic diplomacy.

South Africa has preferential market access agreements with the USA, the EU and the UK, which accounts to, amongst others, R906 billion of South African’s exports. A significant portion of exports are in value-added, namely, manufacturing goods and of services, and support approximately 1 million jobs.

Therefore, these accounts for 38% of foreign pledges in the investment drive, and 78% of our foreign direct investment, FDI, stocks.

President Ramaphosa undertook an official working visit to Washington, DC on 16 September at the invitation of President Biden. The bilateral talks focused on a range of critical issues where trade and investment, energy, global peace and security, food security, climate change and the just energy

transition, including the reform of the United Nations were discussed.

The visit appreciated the strong bilateral relations between the US and South Africa given the fact that an overestimated 600 US companies were operating in South Africa. As part of the outcomes of the visit, a joint task force on trade and investment is to be established to expand our bilateral ties between the two countries.

Over the past year, we were able to undertake official visits to a number of countries in Western Europe, including the United Kingdom, Spain and Portugal, and we hosted our counterparts from Austria, Spain, Belgium and Switzerland. Our President also undertook a state visit to the UK on the invitation of King Charles III. He further Their Majesties of the King and Queen of Belgium, as well as the President of Spain for an official visit. As result, a joint Belgian-South Africa battery research project is being undertaken at the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, CSIR, and the first African-grown mRNA vaccine is being developed in collaboration with Belgium nonstate partners.

South Africa remains the only African country and only one of ten countries globally that has a strategic partnership with the European Union.

The Nordic region remains one of South Africa’s evergreen partnerships. South Africa’s President and the Prime Minister of Norway co-chairs the The Access to COVID-19 Tools, ACT, Accelerator, which facilitates increased collaboration to accelerate development, production, and equitable access to COVID-19 tests, treatments, and vaccines. The President also hosted Your Excellency, the President of the Republic of Finland on a State Visit.

Co-operation between South Africa and the Central European countries has progressed extensively since 2016, and there were various exchange programmes with Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Romania, Poland and Croatia.

We have hosted a number of bilateral consultations with our counterparts in Central Europe, including with the Bulgarians, Czechs and Polish; and senior official’ meetings with Hungary, Romania, Croatia and Slovenia. Relations with the Baltics

continues to expand and bilateral consultations were held with Lithuania and Latvia.

With regard to our relations with Canada, I wish to inform the House that Canada remains an important ally in helping address our domestic priorities, including our strive to construct a developmental and capable state. We further look forward to the imminent signing of the long-awaited agreement between South Africa and Canada on audio-visual co-production, which will benefit South Africa’s creative sector.

The Russian Federation remains a strategic bilateral partner of South Africa. The Intergovernmental Committee on Trade and Economic Co-operation, ITEC, was convened by the Minister and presided over by senior officials beforehand. The second Russian-Africa Summit is scheduled to convene in St Petersburg in July 2023.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, we have convened a number of political consultations and meetings, which were held with Brazil, Cuba, Chile, Ecuador, Guyana, Jamaica, Uruguay and Venezuela.

We remains steadfast in our solidarity with the people of Cuba as they battle the effects of decades of sanctions and economic blockages. The Cubans stood with us in our darkest hour and continue to do so today. Our solidarity with Cuba transcends politics, for example, in the education sector, more than 2 000 South African students have received medical training in Cuba, and the Henry Reeves Medical Brigade stands as an epitome of Ubuntu Diplomacy.

Oliver Tambo, on the occasion of the Olfe Palme Memorial Lecture in January 1987, in Sweden reminded us, and I quote, “Each day carries both the burden of its past and the seeds of its future”. The developed North carries the burden of its past and equally has a unique opportunity to carry the seeds of our future together with us as Africans, as we jointly address the challenges of unemployment, poverty and inequality in the developing South.

House Chairperson, I wish to indicate to the Minister of International Relations, Minister Pandor that we value her indelible leadership, and we wish to conclude by wishing her and more than 20 million South African mothers a blessed Mother’s Day on Sunday, and we do so by saying, Malibongwe!

Mr N L S KWANKWA: Hon House Chair, we are of the view that the department should align the economic diplomacy with domestic priorities of our country as the Minister indicated earlier.

This department has an important role of ensuring or maintaining a great balancing act between local realities and global expectations. The need to ensure that in our country there is micro economic prudence along rapid economic growth and job creation to opportunities that are found that can actually result from the bilateral agreements into which we enter with various countries around the world.

This department also has an important role in matching the impulses of nationalism with the needs of foreign investors as a way of trying to attract foreign direct investments in our country. However, we are not convinced that in the majority of instances, we marry economic diplomacy with domestic priorities. For an example, one of our major gripes as a political party is how we use the African Renaissance Fund and the International Co-operation Fund. We are of the view that more conditions should be attached especially where we give resources to the countries that have conflict as a way of trying to resolve conflict. For instance, South Sudan received about a R100 million in the past when we were trying to

resolve conflict there. Even Zimbabwe received funding but it does not seem there is improvement on the ground in countries where South Africa is supporting conflict resolution measures and it does not seem to be clear economic spin offs for the country in so far as these conflict resolution measures are concerned.

The other concern that we had Minister is that, it is a problem that we are facing as a country, probably because of our history, the most powerful countries in the world seem to believe that at times we should be promoting human rights and peace, seem to believe in the primitive doctrine that might just be right. Once they use conflict to resolve their disagreement issues, they expect South Africa to be continental and global fire fighters to try fight and extinguish fires that they themselves started. We must not be tied. We are also concerned obviously naturally about the conflict that is taking place between Russia and Ukraine but it is not the only conflict that is taking place around the world and even continentally.

A speaker highlighted what we already know about the conflict in Sudan. We also know what is happening in the Eastern

Democratic Republic of Congo that there is conflict going on, there is conflict in Ethiopia, in Eritrea and there is conflict in many parts of the world where people do not even get to speak about it. The only thing we hear about is Ukraine. We want to hear about Ukraine obviously and we want that conflict to be resolved but social challenges that are faced by African continent. So, it should also focus on the lives that are being lost in the continent daily due to conflicts.

We are of the view that ... [Time expired.]

*IsiXhosa*:

... kwekhu, livele likhawuleze eli xesha xa uthetha ngobu buxhaka-xhaka.

Mr A M SHAIK EMAM: Hon Chairperson, let me start me start off by saying that some people forget that once upon a time in this beautiful country of ours, you had the majority undermined. Your human rights were violated by the minority and now when you join the minority you think you became the same colour as them. That is the problem with some of the people. Somebody undermined us the other day, Chairperson when

we said if you are a small party and you passed the Motion in this House. Well, let me tell you because we did it because we respect human rights. We respect human rights, something you do not know and understand because all you know and understand is the support and get funded by the west. It is all about money. When you get funded by the west you sing like puppets and their song. That is what you do.

Be that as it may be, it is 75 years today when the Israeli government with the barbaric actions demolished the 418 villages. Let me repeat, 418 villages and yet we have people that are coming here and want to defend the action of the unlawful and illegal Israel government. Now, let me go one step further, not long ago, Khader Adnan was on hunger strike for 87 days. What was his crime? They say he was inciting violence. All what this man is doing is standing up for his rights. He is standing up for what he believes in, his land and his home where he was born and you are saying he is inciting violence.

Now, hon Minister, I want to commend you and your department and the Deputy Minister, it is correct with the way you are handling the department. Certainly, you are. I want to say

that there are South Africans that are training in the Israeli military. It is a great risk to this country with dual citizenship. I think we need to deal with the issue of the Palestinians who need visas to come here but not the Israeli. They are a risk, not the Palestinian people.

I want to say as far as the Russians are concerned that, it is not the Russian President Putin that is a problem. It is the west that is a problem. That is war is not about Russia and Ukraine. This war is between the United States of America and Russia. That is what it is all about. So, I want to say do whatever this government has to do but President Putin will come here. He will participate in this Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Brics and nobody is going to touch him even if he it means we must come out of the International Convention Centre, ICC, so be it. We must do that as well because the only thing that they do is to target African leaders and nobody else. Why has not anybody done anything about Bush, why has not anybody done anything about Blair, why has not done about the notorious Netanyahu? Why they have not done anything about them? So, we are saying Bush, Blair must all face the might of the law. The NFP supports the Budget Vote 6. [Time expired.]

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CO-

OPERATION (Ms K C Mashego-Dlamini): Hon Minister, Dr Naledi Pandor and other Ministers who are on the platform, Deputy Minister Botes and other Deputy Ministers on the platform, chairperson of the Portfolio Committee, hon Mr Supra Mahumapelo, hon Members of Parliament, the director-generals and our officials present, ladies and gentlemen, it is a great honour and privilege to be given this opportunity to present our Budget Vote speech, on this date in the evolution of our country’s democracy.

It was on this date in May 1994, when our first democratically elected President was inaugurated. This is the day that brought hope for all people or African child and the world at large. Hon members, this is the most significant day in the history of our country and the world. Therefore, in honouring this important day I hope to present a speech that will bring hope to the masses of this country.

The regions of the world, which my work as Deputy Minister is primarily focused on – those being Asia, the Middle East and Africa – abound with opportunities for our country in terms of trade and investment. Given the need to expedite economic

diplomacy to meet our urgent domestic needs, we need to capitalise on these opportunities. As the Minister’s speech covers the importance of Africa to our foreign policy, I will focus my comments on our relations with Asia and the Middle East.

The Indian Ocean Rim Association, Iora, is making significant strides as a platform for Indian Ocean states. The endeavours of Iora, through its working groups, have achieved substantial contributions to skills enhancement, technology transfer, technological simulations and industrial simulations. This work is important for unlocking the oceans economy through localisation and value chain creation.

Brazil has taken over as the new President of India-Brazil- South Africa, Ibsa, with a promise to invigorate the Ibsa formation. The India-Brazil-South Africa Fund, Ibsa fund, has achieved great strides in uplifting the most vulnerable in some African countries, particularly women and children. The fund has made available over US $4 million, which will be rolled out to projects in countries such as Mozambique, Lesotho, Senegal, and the Gambia.

South Africa’s relationship with the Peoples’ Republic of China is underpinned by the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, and the Ten-Year Strategic Programme on Cooperation 2020-2029. The two countries hold regular high- level political engagements, including on the margins of global multilateral for a, such as the G20 and United Nations.

This year, we celebrate 25 years since the formal establishment of diplomatic ties in 1998. South Africa and China co-operate in multilateral affairs, defending multilateralism, and safeguarding an open and inclusive global trading system. South Africa and China continue to reinforce mutual aspirations of promoting South-South co-operation and development through Brics and Focac.

China remains South Africa’s largest global trading partner in terms of total volumes of bilateral trade, with total trade for 2022 topping R614 billion, up from R544 billion in 2021.

However, a growing trade deficit with China of R154 billion remains a concern for South Africa, which must be addressed through more aggressive exports of value-added goods from South Africa, and by negotiating greater market access into China for more diverse South African products. South Africa is

grateful for the *Jobs Fair* that China hosted in 2022, which provided 1 000 jobs for South African youth, and China’s commitment to create an additional 19 000 jobs over the next three years.

Japan is a substantial investor in the South African economy, with investments of over R100 billion, creating around

200 000 local jobs. South Africa co-chaired the SA-Japan 13th Partnership Forum in October last year, and the outcome of discussions is set to advance bilateral relations, as already seen by the visits of senior government officials, including the minister of state for foreign affairs.

With regards to the Republic of Korea, Rok, the first Joint Co-operation Commission was co-chaired in October 2022, and the successful deliberations will lead to stronger bilateral relations. South Africa is Korea’s largest trading partner in Africa, and Korea is our fourth largest trading partner in Asia.

South Africa is grateful for the continued support from New Zealand in the form of development scholarships. Co-operation with New Zealand in the fields of agriculture, science and

innovation, research, trade and investment, as well as transport is valuable. We look forward to celebrating the 30th anniversary of the establishment of relations between our two countries in 2024.

The 8th Senior Officials’ Meeting with Australia was hosted in South Africa in March. The two countries will celebrate

30 years of diplomatic relations in 2024. South Africa is Australia’s largest and most dynamic market in Africa, and in 2022 total trade between our countries stood at approximately R34 billion, up from R28,6 billion in 2021, with the trade balance in Australia’s favour.

South Africa has launched a major initiative to become a Sectoral Dialogue Partner with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Asean. We look forward to improved trade and investment cooperation, as well as building strategic partnerships for mutual and regional prosperity.

Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, Singapore, and the Philippines will all be celebrating 30 years of formal diplomatic relations with South Africa this year. Structured bilateral

mechanisms with these countries are instrumental in terms of strengthening trade and investment cooperation.

South Africa and India will also be celebrating 30 years of formal diplomatic relations this year. India is currently also one of South Africa’s largest trading partners in Asia. South Africa is to host the next Joint Ministerial Commission, JMC, this year. South Africa participated in investment and trade conferences held by both India and Pakistan.

Pakistan hosted the Third Pakistan Africa Trade Conference in November 2022. South Africa commends Pakistan for implementing a new policy it terms, “Engage Africa”, which is driven by the ministry of commerce, textile, industry, production and investment, and supported by the ministry of foreign affairs of Pakistan. We welcome this initiative by Pakistan, to build new partnerships for mutual development with the African continent.

The Sri Lankan foreign minister, Mr Ali Sabry, led a delegation from Sri Lanka on a study visit to South Africa in March, this year, to learn from South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation process. This is a continuation of the support

South Africa has provided towards national reconciliation and nation building.

The Bangladeshi minister of state for foreign affairs, Mr Shahriar Alam visited South Africa in February this year. He inaugurated the, “*Made in Bangladesh*” exhibition at the Sheraton Hotel, and we held bilateral meetings.

We are deeply appreciative of the humanitarian assistance countries in the Gulf region have provided to our country – notably with the floods in KwaZulu-Natal. Countries in the Gulf region have become critical contributors to the implementation of the Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan. Various high-level visits, including the visit by President Ramaphosa to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in October last year, have served as a catalyst to increase investment as well as trade and economic linkages with major economic powers in the region.

South Africa has increased its frequency of engagement with countries from the Levant region, and is in the process of expanding our legal frameworks of closer collaboration with

countries like the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Lebanon.

In response to the humanitarian crisis following the devastating earthquake that hit Syria on 6 February this year, South Africa made a contribution of R5 million through the International Committee of the Red Cross, earmarked for Syria. South Africa is also exploring other avenues to assist with the medium to long term rebuilding ... [Time expired.] Thank you very much, Chair.

Mr M CHETTY: Hon Chairperson, hon Minister, members, the Department of International Relations and Co-operation, Dirco, continues to portrays itself as a department that’s a law unto themselves, yet they continuously serve as a shining example on how to make a mess of a multibillion rand budget, when your internal controls are reliant on factors that you are not in control of.

This department is a clear example of the terminology “polificcials”. In this department, the officials act as if they are the politicians, making decisions, whilst the

political bigwigs have to regulate, or do damage control, due to the Officials errant behaviour.

I must however hasten to add, that the officials did make the right call, when the department issued a statement, criticising Putin’s Russia attack on Ukraine. However, this was short-lived, when the Minister and President flip flop, Ramaphosa, issued a contradicting the Dirco’s position. Let’s not forget the most recent flip flop between the officials and the political leaders of Dirco, when the department called for the enforcement of the International Criminal Court, ICC, ruling for Russia’s Putin’s arrest, where he had to come to South Africa for the upcoming Brics summit, and the political leaders’ flip flop stance retracting that statement.

To add further embarrassment, we had the leadership flip flopping again when it came to our membership of the ICC. One minute we leaving, the next we are not. The on-the-fence middle ground position that we find ourselves, as South Africa, regarding our position on Russia’s invasion on Ukraine, is another international embarrassment that the lackluster leadership has bestowed upon South Africa.

Even our Brics counterparts, Brazil, India and China, have taken a stance voting in favour of the United Nations resolution, regarding Putin’s escapades in Ukraine, whilst, as usual, South Africa chose to abstain. This resolution describes Russia as an aggressor in Ukraine and calls for those responsible for violations to be brought to book under international law.

The UN recognises the International Criminal Court, which has issued an arrest warrant for Russian President, Vladimir Putin. It’s this indecisive leadership that’s causing South Africa embarrassment on the international stage. One can’t be faulted for assuming that the Ministers continuous accompanying of the President on his overseas junkets, has his flip flop tendencies rubbing off onto her.

This department still hasn’t learnt from the infamous R118 million New York violent shenanigans, for which, no arrests has been made, to date, and no monies have been

recovered, as the department continues with the current Pan- African Parliament, Pap, project, that costs us currently R3,2 million a month in rental. The current long delayed infamous Pan-African Parliament building, has already cost us

R90 million and that is excluding the R40 million a year rental for Gallagher estates.

Minister, with the current situation, South Africa can ill- afford this vanity project anymore. Over half a billion rand has already been spent on rentals and with nothing more than a barren piece of land to show thus far. Minister, we call upon your department to abandon this project and allow those other member countries who are eagerly wanting to host Pap in their countries to rescue us from further embarrassment.

And, please, let us not waffle on about how important and what prestige this brings to our country, for if it was that important, we would have already had the buildings erected, and occupied within the first three to five years of us been granted the host country privilege. Let it be known that it took India, our Brics partner, 17 months to build a new Parliament in Delhi.

Sadly, internationally, we are viewed in poor light, as a rudderless boat been steered without a captain. With a more stabilised government and a higher foreign investor confidence

in the party leading this country, we could see more stability in the spending of this Budget. I thank you.

Mr B S NKOSI: Hon Chair, hon chair of the portfolio committee, hon Minister of the Department of International Relations and Co-operations, Dirco, Dr Pandor; hon Deputy Ministers, Mashego and Botes, hon members, as I join those who are welcoming the Budget today, I would like to commend the department for the great work it has done in representing South Africa on various international platforms and for communicating and asserting our foreign policy diligently and correctly.

We have witnessed the department’s performance in providing support for South African citizens that face challenges in countries facing violent conflict, and in other areas where there are other forms of natural disasters.

Recently, we witnessed the successful repatriation of South Africans from Sudan, shortly after similar such efforts in Turkey and Syria. This good work must continue and we continue to encourage South Africans to report their presence to our embassies and missions. This, on its own, will assist the identification of citizens in case of strife.

To build on the good work that continues to be done by the department, we need to deliberate and focus on making South Africa an influential partner and equal partner in the global, regional, continental and particularly, in the Global South.

In order to do this, we must intensify, on our side, service delivery at home, in order to position ourselves positively in the international arena.

The current challenges of load shedding must be resolved speedily, so that we do not affect trade with specific countries and international relations we have with other countries, bearing in mind that the negative effects of load shedding may affect our trade status.

We have confidence that the work being done to address this dilemma will soon bear results, so that our standing improves internationally and is not compromised. Providing long-term solutions in this regard will contribute to the just energy transition underway in this country and on the continent.

South Africa must maintain a robust stance on foreign policy ideals. Our democracy is a product of a long and productive struggle, which included violent conflict and we must be

guided by our oldest principle document, the Freedom Charter, which declares that, and I quote: “There shall be peace and comfort.” This will be done by a South Africa that continually exercises its independent international relations, respecting the sovereignty of all its neighbours and all countries engaged in international relations.

There is no intention on our side to impose our will, but we work within and are guided by these international relations, adhering to and supporting and enhancing principles upon which these relations are based.

We must encourage and deepen our participation in various Brics fora, like the Business Council, the Women Business Alliance, youth interaction and exchange, the Think Tanks Council and civil society platforms, to ensure that the opportunities of these associations are explored maximally and shared across society in this country.

South Africans must participate in all these fora and travel to other countries to gain exposure and experience on how best we can address the issues we are confronted with. We must encourage the exchange of knowledge and ideas, as we grow

within this space. Our involvement will also boost tourism and provide our economic growth and development, both as a country individually, within the region, and in particular, on this continent.

Most countries, for example, Egypt has joined the New Development Bank, while others have expressed an interest to do so. This is an important development, which, as a country, we embrace and welcome. The Bank provides financial support to emerging markets and developing economies for infrastructure and sustainable development.

This support will be groundbreaking, if all African countries and those that apply, in particular are welcomed. This can increase and boost investment and trade opportunities in the region and the continent. It also comes without onerous conditionality and direct or indirect structural adjustment measures imposed by funding agencies that have hereinto done so, to stifle economic growth and development of countries on the continent. This conditionality continues to perpetuate poverty and to relegate African countries to the bottom of the ladder of trade in international relations.

As we know, Brics countries agree that the United Nations must remain the center of multilateralism and these fora must be reformed to make them more effective, inclusive and representative of the global community. This includes reforms of the United Nations Security Council, to ensure that African countries and other regions of the Global South are properly represented and that their interest are effectively advanced.

We must therefore continue to advocate for Brics to accept more African countries that have shown interest to join this body at a time when we are chairing this important forum.

We know that post-1945, when peace was established through multilateral institutions, there have been skirmishes and notable interventions in terms of war and escalation. However, the entire community has committed to creating and maintaining peace through both preventative measures and combatting it when it happens. The escalation of war since 1945, is not an indication that humanity has turned its back on the creation of peace.

South Africa embraces this and regards it as central for the advancement and development of all communities, particularly

those of us who are in the south. We know the emanation of this has come from a desire to impose unilateral dual interest, particularly in part of the developed world in other parts of the continent and the world.

However, working within Brics and other fora, we assured that we have friends even in those developed countries that, with us, commit to the reform of this multilateral institution to ensure inclusivity and representation by all of us.

The UN was not created at the behest of anybody but in the interest of all humanity, and therefore, as a country, we will act within this and not deviate in any way.

We commit ourselves to the founding values of Brics, which include the need to restructure the global, political, economic and financial relations to be more balanced and representative. This, we do not commit to as a figment of our thinking but because we have a commitment to ensure that humanity develops and develops so on an equal basis, without anyone imposing their own self-interest on others.

A few week ago, we successfully hosted the AfCFTA Business Fora here in Cape Town. This was a resounding success. The AfCFTA is the world’s largest free-trade area, bringing together 55 countries of the African Union and eight regional economies, to create the second largest free-trade market for the continent.

The aim is to enable a free flow of goods and services across the continent and to boost the trading position of Africa in the global market, to accelerate infrastructure development, to generate growth and the attainment of a better live for all the people of this continent.

There are great opportunities for us in different industries with different countries within Brics and on the continent. All opportunities that are logged must be made available to the people of the country, so that they fully benefit from all partnerships and involvement in these different bodies.

We must strengthen our economic diplomacy and promote co- operation between countries and within the African continent. Africa is very rich in mineral resources and wealth and this must be engaged to improve the quality of life and the

attainment of a better life for all the people of this continent. Using available treaties, regulations and agreements, it is time that we must assert that we will trade within the continent first and foremost and enhance our global involvement in the international trade.

Our President has stated that, one of our priorities during our chairpersonship of Brics, is to ensure that we unlock mutually beneficial opportunities to increase trade within this continent, to ensure that there is investment and infrastructure development, and most importantly, to transition justly new forms of energy provision.

The continent is witnessing a number of initiative that ensure that we contribute towards this goal. This is the Africa we want and this is the Africa we will create. This is the Africa in which South Africa plays an active role, without imposing its will, but working jointly with all other countries.

In the month of March, we celebrated International Women’s Month. We celebrated particularly in New York and the UN. Our delegation was represented by the Dirco Minister, who did so

ably to place on the agenda the plight of women in the underdeveloped world and in the developing world.

We welcome this as an initiative that continue to place the plight of women on the agenda of development and a sustainable enhancement of economic involvement by all sectors of women, rich or poor.

It is important that we correctly ensure that women and youth play a gainful role in redeveloping and redefining the plight of this sector of society.

As I conclude, I would like to welcome hon Powell to the committee, but to remind her also that in this committee, we work quite jointly and when we differ, we differ robustly so. Welcome, hon Powell, and we remind you that Ukraine that we are celebrating today is a Ukraine that we and many of our predecessors have been trained in, but it was not a Ukraine of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, Nato; it was a Ukraine of the USSR. I thank you.

Mr M NYHONTSO: Hon Acting House Chair, we are not debating. However, we support this budget. Thank you, Acting House Chair.

Mr M G E HENDRICKS: House Chair, Deputy Speaker, our leader, happy Mother’s Day Minister Naledi Pandor and my favourite the hon Chief Whip of the Majority Party. It is with great pleasure and humbleness that Al Jama-ah supports this budget to show my constituency’s confidence in Minister Naledi Pandor and her Deputy Ministers.

Being part of South Africa’s political system and a proactive Member of Parliament and co-governing the City of Johannesburg with eight other political parties, I am more than happy to support the Department of International Relations and Co- operation’s, Dirco, budget. We as a political party, Al Jama- ah, are of the opinion that our country has accomplished realistic results by maintaining good and fair relationships with several countries over the past two and more decades.

We admire the way Dirco steered international relationships as it encountered ... [Inaudible.] ... industrial relations affairs, regionally, continentally and globally. South Africa

is proud of Minister Naledi Pandor for stepping in the shoes of Oliver Tambo as we remember him for establishing solid relations with countries all over the world. Our formed opinion is that Dirco’s drafted budget for 2022-23 was reasonably and judiciously divided, considering the abnormal circumstances that the world community faced, and we trust that the budget for 2023-24 will deliver better results.

At this juncture allow me to say that it is, indeed, difficult for our country in general and Dirco in particular, to stay the ties with each and every country including both rogue states and nonrogue states across the world. It was observed that despite the challenges - internal and other external factors, our country’s department has done reasonably well and here I wish to congratulate the Minister of International Relations and Co-operation, Dr Naledi Pandor, and her team for having kept their fingers on the global pulse. We should remind ourselves of industrial relations ties that our country has with certain rogue states, ones that rebelliously ignored human rights laws within their borders. We think of Netanyahu Zionist Israel, and we think of the occupation of Western Sahara by Morocco.

There are other countries under occupation and our voices seems to be silent. Our country is duty-bound to proactively come to these communities’ assistance by showing our eagerness to firmly tackle matters that affect us as a global society and even provide them with weapons like they did in the harshest days of apartheid to defend themselves, but not to use the weapons to attack.

Let me wave the flag for diplomatic staff in South Africa who struggle for residency in spite of qualifying and having sons and daughters born in South Africa and graduated ... [Interjections.] ... at our universities. These include countries like Iran and Indonesia, while this is a prerogative of Home Affairs that we must ... [Interjections.] ... for them.

The CHAIRPERSON (Mr M G Mahlaule): Hon Hendricks! Hon Hendricks!

Mr M G E HENDRICKS: Dirco must insist ... [Interjections.] ... that we have established at Home

Affairs to fast-track their applications. We cannot wait for

10 years of applying and qualifying.

The CHAIRPERSON (Mr M G Mahlaule): Hon Hendricks! Can you switch off that microphone, please? Hon Hendricks! Hon Hendricks! Hon Hendricks!

Mr M G E HENDRICKS: My time is up, I just heard hon House Chair, is that correct?

The CHAIRPERSON (Mr M G Mahlaule): Hon Hendricks!

Mr M G E HENDRICKS: Where is the Minister of Police? Where is the Minister of Defence to defend me ... [Inaudible.]

The CHAIRPERSON (Mr M G Mahlaule): Hon Hendricks!

Mr M G E HENDRICKS: My time is not up, hon member.

The CHAIRPERSON (Mr M G Mahlaule): Hon Hendricks!

Mr M G E HENDRICKS: Your time is up; we will take the Western Cape from you.

The CHAIRPERSON (Mr M G Mahlaule): Hon Hendricks!

Mr M G E HENDRICKS: You will not make the Western Cape the 55th country of Africa.

The CHAIRPERSON (Mr M G Mahlaule): Hon Hendricks! Hon Hendricks! Hon Hendricks! Hon Hendricks!

Mr M G E HENDRICKS: We trusted you in the City of Johannesburg twice. We trusted you twice ... [Interjections.]

The CHAIRPERSON (Mr M G Mahlaule): Can you please leave the Chamber?

Mr M G E HENDRICKS: I introduced spy equipment in the City of Johannesburg, and we will charge you for terrorism. The DA is a terrorist party.

The CHAIRPERSON (Mr M G Mahlaule): Can you please leave the Chamber? Can the sergeant-at-arms assist me to take hon Hendricks out?

Mr M G E HENDRICKS: Thank you, hon Chair.

The CHAIRPERSON (Mr M G Mahlaule): Hon Hendricks! Hon Hendricks, while you are still there, can you please leave the Chamber.

Mr M G E HENDRICKS: Sorry!

The CHAIRPERSON (Mr M G Mahlaule): Can you please immediately leave the Chamber. There’s a point of order.

The CHIEF WHIP OF THE OPPOSITION: House Chair, I’ve noted your ruling to throw Mr Hendricks’ out, but I would like you to please in the full sitting of the House to make a ruling on his behaviour. I don’t think people undermining you saying that their time is up and then continuing to shout profanities on the podium is actually parliamentary. Therefore, I’d like you to please make a ruling when the sitting is sitting.

The CHAIRPERSON (Mr M G Mahlaule): With pleasure, I will do so. Thank you very much. As I wait for hon Hendricks to leave, Deputy Chief Whip of the Majority Party, you have a point of order.

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP OF THE MAJORITY PARTY: Yes, hon

Chairperson. Thank you very much for recognising me. However, by throwing him out of the House now you have already imposed a penalty. He’s not sitting now in the House; you have already thrown him out. That is a penalty on its own.

The CHAIRPERSON (Mr M G Mahlaule): Thank you very much. We’ll look into that properly so that it’s legally properly processed. Hon Faber.

Mr W F FABER**:** Acting House Chairperson, the department allocated R6,6 billion budget this year has decreased by 1,3%. The currency fluctuation of the rand shows that in April 2022, R14,60 was worth one dollar, we are now around R18,40,

$14,2 million less in value than last year. The main reason for the decrease of the South African rand is because of poor ANC political and diplomatic decisions taken, while on the other hand, we have a President collecting valuable dollars on his farm in his secret furniture business.

South Africa has one of the largest diplomatic corps in the world with salaries of employees amounting to R2,8 billion. Some of this seems to be a complete waste of money with our

embassies headed predominantly by political appointments, used by the ANC Presidents to reward comrades and not adding any value to South Africa’s economy. Government should shrink its footprint especially where we don’t find any economic benefit where we currently have 125 diplomatic missions represented in

108 countries with a property portfolio of 127 state-owned properties and more than 1 000 rented properties abroad on the African Renaissance Fund. The African Renaissance Fund was promulgated in 2001. This Act provides for the purpose of enhancing international co-operation with and on the African continent and to confirm the Republic of South Africa’s commitment to Africa. Now, in 2012, President Zuma somehow added Cuba to become part of the African continent, and bail them out with R300 million Economic Assistance Package, similar to his fire pool that he also added to his Nkandla home for safety reasons.

Then last year Minister Pandor wanted to donate a R50 million to Cuba, we can just be thankful that the courts stopped her in her tracks. Therefore, Minister, now, I will be the other irritating bee in your other ear. Minister, the ANC’s romantic and emotional connectivity with Cuba is taking food from the tables of many poor South Africans. One wonders if the ANC is

using Cuba, may be as a laundromat. It is mindboggling that the ANC can still be adamant by putting Cuba before South Africans who suffer every day to provide to their families. Coming to Brazil, China, India, and Russia, Brics, and the National Development, only China, Minister, sustained an extensive growth while the other Brics member ... [Inaudible.]

... South African and Russian stagnated. As South Africa we should not be penny wise and pound foolish. South Africa’s total trade with United States and European Union were over R900 billion during the last year, while the trade with Russia was only R15 billion and China coming in at R480 ... [Interjections.]

The CHAIRPERSON (Mr M G Mahlaule): Hon Faber, there’s a point of order.

Mr K E MAGAXA: Acting House Chair, is the member willing to take a question.

Mr W F FABER: No, I’m not willing to take your question.

Mr K E MAGAXA: I just want to ask him a question whether ... [Interjections.]

Mr W F FABER: No, I’m not taking your question.

The CHAIRPERSON (Mr M G Mahlaule): ... [Inaudible.] ... ask him ... [Interjections.]

Mr W F FABER: ... [Inaudible.] ... does allow you to take hearing aid.

The CHAIRPERSON (Mr M G Mahlaule): Hon Faber! Hon Faber! Hon Faber!

Mr W F FABER: He’s got money for hearing aid through your ... [Interjections.]

The CHAIRPERSON (Mr M G Mahlaule): Hon Faber! Hon Faber, don’t repeat what was done by hon Hendricks. The member rightfully so is standing up to ask me whether you are willing to take a question. Hon Faber, are you willing to take a question?

Mr W F FABER: No, Acting House Chairperson.

The CHAIRPERSON (Mr M G Mahlaule): Thank you very much. He’s not willing to take a question. Can you proceed?

Mr W F FABER: Acting House Chairperson, yes. As I said Russia was only 15 billion with a business with us. Now, in conclusion, Acting House Chairperson, siding with Russia as well as the debacle on International Criminal Court we witnessed in the last few weeks and this flip-flopping, South Africa will eventually be alienated from the west which will destroy our economy, the little bit that is still left.

Therefore, to save South Africa we have to remove this ANC government at the voting polls in 2024, and replace them with a component DA government as is running in Cape Town. I thank you.

Mr D L MOELA: Thank you, House Chair...

*Siswati:*

Ngyabingelela kuSosiswebhu weNhlangano lebusako eNingizimu Afrika make Majodina, iNdvuna yeLitiko leBudlelwane Bemave ngemave kanye nekuBambisana, Sihlalo weLikomidi babe Mahumapelo, neTindvuna letingemaSekela teLitiko le- leBudlelwane Bemave ngemave kanye nekuBambisana, nemalunga lahloniphekile aleNdlu lesikuyo kanye netakhamiti taseNingizimu Afrika...

*English:*

The 2022-23 Budget Vote is tabled under the conditions that the Minister of Finance defines as difficult in the domestic and global economic environment.

The crisis between Russia and Ukraine as well as its effects on commodities markets, supply chain, inflation and financial conditions has exacerbated to a global slump. High global inflation could result to a quick tightening of monetary policy in countries. Causing financial strain in some of the emerging markets and developing economies. Nevertheless, while navigating this difficult terrain it is testament through its budget.

The Deputy Minister of International Relations and Co- operation, DIRCO, remains committed to its mandate as the custodian of South Africa’s foreign policy. As stated in the Goal 7 of our Medium Term Strategic Framework, South Africa is dedicated to using its foreign policy to contribute to a better South Africa, better Africa and a better world.

Our government demonstrated its commitment by implementing a comprehensive ... [Inaudible.] ... DIRCO has played a pivotal

role in facilitating foreign investment in the economy. For the last financial year, DIRCO has undertook to prioritize economic diplomacy as one of its sub-programmes to be carried out by its mission abroad. We also pursue African agenda and urgently require a co-ordination mechanism that will facilitate a close partnership between government and business, and will provide leadership to our government, wide effort to promote our economic interests.

The economic relations or relationship between South Africa, the Southern African Development Community, SADC, region, and the continent will greatly benefit from one more co-ordinated approach which will also assist in attracting foreign direct investment and building economic or economies of scale.

As we celebrate Africa Month, as of December 2017, South Africa’s total trade with Africa stood at R420 billion in favour of South Africa. We predominantly export raw material, thus affirming the strategic importance of the continent of South Africa’s economic development. For South Africa, to secure a better life for all, it is important that this trend continues beyond the confines of our continent and to the rest of the world. It is imperative to ensure Africa is not only a

market for foreign multinational companies, but equal partners in economic affairs of the world.

The 2023-24 budget is a people-driven centre, and it creates an enabling environment for South African business abroad and those who are based domestically who are seeking to penetrate the global market. We are encouraged by the work of the Ministry in their mandate to realize South Africa’s foreign policy objectives in a difficult global arena, hon Minister. We therefore support all efforts that seeks to maintain our national sovereignty in pursuing our country’s development a developmental agenda.

Hon Msane, unfortunately, this is not the fundraising session but it must be noted that is a plenary assembly. So we must be able to understand that when you want to fundraise, my hon Msane, go and do a fundraising dinner. Hon Hlengwa, what do you want?

*IsiZulu*:

Ufunani e-zoo? Phuma e-zoo...

*English:*

... It is not your area of territory. Hon Chairperson, we therefore welcome the budget presented here and we appreciate all the great work that has been done by the department, and also in all our region and foreign missions. Vote ANC in 2024. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRPERSON (Mr M G Mahlaule): The next and last speaker will be the hon Minister of International Relations and Co- operation, who will have nine minutes because she left four minutes from her original time. The hon Minister.

The MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CO-OPERATION: Hon

members, I wish to begin by thanking all members who participated in this debate. I must say that I am disappointed that we did not congratulate the officials of the department for having achieved an unqualified audit outcome for the first time in many years. I am saying it as it has been left unsaid.

I am also extremely concerned that much of our discussions about insecurity in conflict is about Ukraine and Russia and not fellow Africans. We must be concerned about Africans and the threats they face every day. We must be worried about food insecurity on the African continent. We should not stand here

and pretend to be Europeans, and we are not. We are part of Africa and we must have attention to the conditions of Africa.

I have just seen a Tweet that say I am very cheeky here. So, let me be calm.

I wish to begin by indicating to the hon Hlengwa that indeed our country does have a foreign policy. We have a White Paper on Foreign Policy that was adopted in 2011. We have the South Africa's national interests paper which is a policy paper articulating South Africa’s foreign policy position which was adopted by government in 2022. I wish also to add that the practice of foreign policy is never fossilised into one policy instrument given the fluidity of international affairs which change from day to day. You would not be able, as you have with regulations with respect to procurement to other matters, say I will act this way today and tomorrow I will act the same way. Foreign relations don’t work in that way.

I also believe that on values and principles as raised by the hon Powell, we will challenge double standards. This is what I said in the symposium which I think you were present. We made it clear that our concern is not values and principles in

respect of human rights, but it is the practice of double standards that we see used in international matters. If you are black you practice genocide, and if you are white and powerful it’s regime change. When it’s sovereignty, it is sovereignty for some, when it is territorial integrity it is territorial integrity for some and for others. That’s what we will challenge. I think you must challenge that too. Just as much as you are concerned as to what is happening in Ukraine so you must be concerned about what is happening to the Palestinians because if you are not, then you are exercising double standards in that the Palestinians don’t matter so much, but Ukrainians’ matter is a great thing. We do not accept that approach in foreign policy.

Of course, hon Msane, I must repeat again that Africa is central to our international relations. Using lovely concepts like Pan-Africanism doesn’t detract from our focus which is Africa at the core. This is why we have an extensive mission’s footprint throughout the African continent and why Africa is our largest trading partner. This is something many of us don’t talk about. We are committed to continuing this focus on our continent and in playing a role in entrenching peace and development in Africa.

I wish to explain to the hon Nkwakwa as well as the hon Faber who raised this important point. Hon Faber, when we say that we are providing support through the African Renaissance Fund we have never handed out cash - never. It is not our practice. The aid we give is goods, and they are goods purchased from the South African company, and not from Cuba or anywhere else. So every support we provide is of South African humanitarian aid purchased from South Africa with the South Africa money.

This is misunderstood by many, many people. We have tried to explain this to you, but of course I know that when you are in the DA even when the truth is right you pretend to ignore it. So, with the African Renaissance Fund, ARF, we are providing critical humanitarian support on the continent and elsewhere.

With Cuba we never said we want to handout money. We found the judgement quite amazing hence we are appealing it. With respect to China and growth, we would like to see high levels of growth because as you would see from the March statistics from the SA Revenue Service, Sars, on export, China is the significant export partner of South Africa. So the higher levels of growth, the more successful are our businesses hence we do want to see greater growth there.

Hon Chetty, I believe it is important that you don’t look only at the fact that South Africa abstained on a number of resolutions on Ukraine, but you must look at whether the resolution sought to achieve the path to diplomacy that we have been proposing and the path to peace which we have insisted. That is what we should focus upon. We have never said that we condone the use of force by any. Never! No one of us in government has ever said that. Our explanation of vote, which you must read in the United Nations, is clear and has made our view very, very clear. We also made it clear that we respect territorial integrity and the sovereignty of all nations including Ukraine and our explanation of vote which is very long and very clear is available for you to read. Hon Powell would recall that yesterday we made reference to this explanation of vote as well.

On the position of peaceful resolution of the war our view is gaining traction. Hon Mulder, this notion that we are not in conversation with our friends in Europe or the United States of America or elsewhere, is wrong. We talk to everyone, and everyone speaks to us. To create this impression that suddenly South Africa has become a pariah is really, really quite misleading to the public of South Africa. The notion that we

must pursue diplomacy and negotiations is something much of the world is beginning to talk about. We were first, but now South Africa’s view is being embraced by many. The call for peace and not more war is also a statements of solidarity with the people of Ukraine who are being killed every day, caught in the war that they did not start and a war which will only end when the most powerful countries in the world decide that peace, and not geopolitical contestations through war is a better option for the world. This is what as South Africans we should be promoting consistently.

Our officials have engaged with all stakeholders including Ukraine and the civil society. These stakeholders appreciate the role South Africa is playing. We are building momentum towards a peace process which we believe will lay the basis for development and the promotion and respect for all human rights.

South Africa can never rejected a process of peace and negotiations because we were told, speak to those who are oppressing you. Negotiate and arrive at a settlement in the interest of all South Africans. Why don’t we want to see that happening with respect with Ukraine? Why do we believe war and

those who call for war are the best at articulating our perspective?

On human rights, let me tell hon members that we were overwhelmingly voted for on to the UN Human Rights Council by almost all members present in the UN General Assembly. This was because of our track record on promoting all human rights and that this track record is respected and known by all. We will continue to engage in the global community to promote all the human rights for all people, and not just for some. Being nonaligned and antiwar is a proof of our commitment to human rights which is much more noble than those who profess to be champions of human rights, but still fuel war and the killing of innocent people. The war in Ukraine is many in the last decade and most of the wars of the last decade have also been unlawful, but we spoke very little about them. [Time expired.] Let me then turn to the matter of finally thanking all our hon members and confirm to them that we remain a member of the Treaty of Rome. Thank you very much.

Debate concluded.

The mini-plenary session rose at 17:16.