



**PARLIAMENT**  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND PROTOCOL DIVISION

PO Box 15 Cape Town 8000 Republic of South Africa

Tel: 27 (21) 403 2911

[www.parliament.gov.za](http://www.parliament.gov.za)

**POLICY PERSPECTIVES AND OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR PARLIAMENT'S  
INVOLVEMENT AND ENGAGEMENT IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

**Policy Review for the Parliamentary Group on International Relations**

**(to be submitted to the Joint Rules Committee for consideration)**

# Table of Contents

<b>CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>4</b>
Purpose .....	4
<b>CHAPTER 2: NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE PARLIAMENTARY DIMENSION TO INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS</b> .....	<b>5</b>
2.1 Role of Parliament.....	5
2.1.1 Historical Context.....	5
2.1.2 Mandate of the South African Parliament.....	5
2.1.3 Role Players .....	8
2.2 National Foreign Policy Imperatives .....	8
2.3 Core Objectives of Parliament’s International Relations.....	9
2.3.1 Guidelines on Programme of Action .....	9
<b>CHAPTER 3: PARTICIPATION OF PARLIAMENT IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS</b> .....	<b>11</b>
3.1 Bilateral Relations.....	11
3.1.1 Strategic Partnerships .....	12
3.1.2 Network Group.....	12
3.1.3 Friendship Groups.....	12
3.2 Multilateral Relations.....	13
3.2.1 The SADC-PF .....	13
3.2.2 The PAP.....	13
3.2.3 The ACP-EU JPA .....	14
3.2.4 The CPA.....	14
3.2.5 The IPU.....	14
3.2.6 Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa Parliamentary Forum .....	15
3.2.7 India, Brazil and South Africa Parliamentary Forum.....	15
3.2.8 Global Legislators’ Organisation International (GLOBE) .....	16
3.2.9 Association of Senates, Shoora and Equivalent Councils in Africa and the Arab World (ASSECAA) .....	16
3.2.10 The Crans Montana Forum .....	17
3.3 Hosting International Relations Conferences and Seminars .....	17
<b>CHAPTER 4: WOMEN AND YOUTH PARLIAMENTARIANS IN INTER-PARLIAMENTARY RELATIONS</b> .....	<b>18</b>
4.1 The Role of Women in Gender Mainstreaming and Women Empowerment .....	18
4.2 The Need for Youth Empowerment.....	20
<b>CHAPTER 5: OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR INVOLVEMENT AND ENGAGEMENT IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS</b> .....	<b>22</b>

5.1 Parliamentary Group on International Relations .....	22
5.1.1 Roles of PGIR Chairpersons .....	22
5.1.2 The PGIR Chairpersons' relationship with the Joint Rules Committee .....	23
5.1.3 The PGIR Chairpersons' relationship with the Joint Programme Committee .....	23
5.1.4 Roles of Focus Groups .....	24
5.1.5 Composition of delegations .....	25
5.1.6 Proposed Steps: Tabling of Reports and Implementation of Resolutions .....	26
5.2 Guideline for Parliamentary Travel Policy .....	27
5.2.1 Travel .....	27
5.2.2 Funding .....	27
5.2.3 Composition of Delegations .....	28
5.2.4 Reporting Requirements .....	28
5.3 International Relations and Protocol Division .....	28
<b>CHAPTER 6: PARLIAMENTARY INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND THE FUTURE .....</b>	<b>31</b>
6.1 Outstanding Political Issues .....	31
6.2 Administrative Considerations .....	33

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide a policy framework for the South African Parliament's participation and cooperation in parliamentary international relations. Since the adoption of the *Policy Perspectives and Operational Guidelines for Parliament's Involvement and Engagement in International Relations* by the Joint Rules Committee on 3 November 2006, developments in the international relations sphere necessitated a revision of Parliament's international relations engagements. In addition, Parliament also adopted international participation as one of its key strategic priorities for the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Parliaments. It therefore against this background that the current Policy is being reviewed.

For ease of reference, the following concepts need to be noted:

**Parliamentary international relations/parliamentary diplomacy:** This refers to a continuation of a national political process and dialogue among parliaments at international level that has been brought about by significant changes in the world. At different international meetings, Members of Parliament (MPs) and Presiding Officers have the opportunity to exchange views and adopt resolutions on a range of international issues and challenges. The purpose of parliamentary international relations is to complement, strengthen and positively influence traditional government diplomacy advantageously, the ultimate aim being not to replace traditional government diplomacy, but rather to enhance it.

**Bilateral:** A bilateral agreement is an agreement between two countries. The agreement can be political, military or economic in nature. Pursuing bilateral agreements is advantageous in the sense that it is easier to negotiate with just one country rather than with several. The South African Parliament formally cooperates with other individual parliaments with the purpose of reinforcing democratic values and ideals; promoting and protecting human rights; promoting women's emancipation; and upholding international law. Formal bilateral cooperation is conducted through strategic partnerships, friendship groups, and memoranda of understanding (MoUs).

**Strategic partnership:** This is a bilateral long-term commitment by two countries to establish a close relationship across a significant number of policy areas. Strategic partnerships are based on equality, mutual trust, respect and understanding.

**Friendship groups:** A friendship group is a group of MPs whose purpose is to establish exchanges with parliamentarians from another country. Therefore, this is a form of bilateral agreement.

**Multilateral:** A multilateral agreement is an agreement between more than two countries. Countries get involved in multilateral agreements because the responsibilities and risks are distributed among the group and thus the situation is more advantageous for individual countries. South Africa actively attends and participates in the various multilateral forums it is affiliated to. Broadly, these multilateral forums provide platforms for MPs to engage on matters of mutual interest, including respect for human rights; the promotion of democracy; gender justice; economic development; and commitments to peace, justice and international law.

## **CHAPTER 2: NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE PARLIAMENTARY DIMENSION TO INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

### **2.1 Role of Parliament**

#### **2.1.1 Historical Context**

Historically, parliaments had limited involvement in the international arena. However, with changes in the international system, such as a new wave of participatory democracy, globalisation and developments in global governance structures, there has been greater impetus for parliamentary engagement in international relations. What this engagement might involve was clearly outlined in the IPU Declaration of the First Conference of Presiding Officers of Parliaments (2000):

*The parliamentary dimension [to international cooperation] must be provided by parliaments themselves first of all at the national level in four distinct but interconnected ways:*

- *Influencing their respective countries' policy on matters dealt with in the United Nations (UN) and other international negotiating forums;*
- *Keeping themselves informed of the progress and outcome of these negotiations;*
- *Deciding on ratification, where the Constitution so foresees, of texts and treaties signed by governments; and*
- *Contributing actively to the subsequent implementation process.*

#### **2.1.2 Mandate of the South African Parliament**

South Africa's foreign policy is an expression of domestic public policy that projects the democratic values of the country. These values are entrenched in the provisions of the 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, which affirms the right of the South African society to live in human dignity, equality, democracy and freedom. In this light, the South African Parliament's international engagement supports and reflects the values enshrined in the South African Constitution. These values also find expression in the aspirations of the African Union (AU) Agenda 2063 strategy, the Southern African Development Community Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (SADC RISDP) and the National Development Plan (NDP) 2030.

#### **6<sup>th</sup> Parliament Strategic Priorities in International Relations**

The 2014-2019 Strategic Plan place more demands on Parliament to deepen engagement at International Fora at both bilateral and multilateral fora...it further identifies the need to prioritise the transformation of the SADC-Parliamentary Forum and Pan African Parliament into full legislative bodies at both regional and continental level as well contribute through its international for to the transformation of institutions of global governance and attainment of Sustainable Development Goals.

The 2019-2024 Strategic Plan acknowledges the global challenges South Africa contributes toward building a better Africa in Better World. It may be observed that the 6<sup>th</sup> Parliament does not deviate from the strategic imperatives of the 5<sup>th</sup> Democratic Parliament given the

absence of the priorities for Parliaments participation in the Strategic Plan of the 6<sup>th</sup> Democratic Parliament. This present PGIR to deliberate on means and ways to strengthen this short and recommend priorities on parliaments participation in international relations through its bilateral and multilateral engagements and further identify national interests to be pursued in each international fora and contributions to be register at multilateral level.

### **National Development Plan**

The National Development Plan provides a road-map and serves as a blueprint on which South Africa`s vision 2030 should be achieved. Chapter 7 of the NDP suggest that in order to pursue and implement an effective foreign policy which is directly linked to the country`s domestic priorities, South African decision makers must be guided a specific set of key –points. These are national interests (**, Africa as a priority, strengthened multilateralism, improved human security, mutually beneficial trade and integrated foreign policy making**).

Chapter 7 of the National Development Plan argues that South Africa`s evolving international engagement is based on two central tenets, Pan-Africanism and South-South Solidarity. It further notes that South Africa`s evolving international relations work must endeavour to shape and strengthen national identity, cultivate national pride and patriotism to ensure social cohesion and stability, and grow the economy for the development and upliftment of all South Africans.

**It is against this backdrop that, Parliament`s mandate and conduct of international relations will reflect the objectives expressed in these key policy documents of the state and posture its participation towards the attainment of such policy imperatives.**

### **Africa`s AGENDA 2063 and SADC Master Plan**

South Africa`s International Relational Policy is conducted against the background of a dynamic domestic, regional and global political and economic environment. In this light, the South African Parliament`s international engagement on policy content must support and reflect the values enshrined in the South African Constitution. These values also find expression in the aspirations of the African Union (AU) Agenda 2063 strategy, the Southern African Development Community Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (SADC RISDP), National Development Plan (NDP) 2030 and United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. The seven Aspirations on AGENDA 2063 are summarised as follow

- A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and Sustainable development
- An Integrated continent, politically united based on the ideals of Pan-Africanism
- An Africa of good governance, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law
- A peaceful and Secure Africa
- An Africa with a strong cultural identity, values and ethics
- An Africa Where development is people-driven, relying particularly on the potential of women and Youth
- Africa as a strong and influential global player and partner

***To this, end South Africa`s commitments derived from its mandate through parliamentary engagements must seek to complement efforts towards achieving seven aspiration expressed in the Agenda 2063 and other policy documents of the state aimed at positioning Africa as a strong, united and influential, global player and partner.***

## **Articulating South Africa`s National Interests**

Conceptually, South Africa`s National Interests are defined as key set of values, aspirations and beliefs that shape the South African society as expressed through both domestic and foreign policies. State is the prime custodian of constitutional responsibility to promote, protect and protects and progressively realise the national vision based on national interests within a certain context and environment. The State defines the nature and number of objectives and priorities to promote National Interests. Furthermore, the State act to implement these objectives through its institutions.

South Africa`s National Interests seeks to attain the sustainable development of South Africa`s people in line with its core values. This encompasses improving the well-being of its people in a united, prosperous, non-racial, non-sexist, cohesive society through a capable, secure and developmental State that contributes to a prosperous country and better region, Continent and world.”

South Africa`s National Interests are inextricably linked to its foreign and domestic policies. As a beneficiary of many acts of selfless solidarity in the past, South Africa believes strongly that what it wishes for its people should be what it wishes for the citizens of the world.

South Africa is no different from the rest of the world. South Africans as a people have embarked on a process to define the country`s National Interests so as to have a precise understanding of how to project the country internationally.

As a nation, South Africa and her people seek to advance national interests gainfully in the pursuit for a better South Africa for the benefit of all her people, the core priority being poverty alleviation from which other priorities derive: employment, dignity, equality

In pursuing the country`s national interests, her decisions are informed by a desire for a just, humane and equitable world order of greater security, peace, dialogue and economic justice.

South Africa is an African country, whose fortunes are inextricably connected to those of our sister countries in the region and the continent. South Africa`s foreign policy engagements are therefore anchored on the African Agenda.

The Department of International Relations and Cooperation has identified 5 pillars of National Interests that shape the South African Society and to be pursued in the implementation of the country`s foreign policy. These include the following;

- The development and upliftment of the people of South Africa
- The Stability of the Republic, its constitutional institutions, values and principles

- The growth and development of South Africa Economy
- Sustainable Environment and natural resources management
- Integrated, peaceful and prosperous Africa in a just and equitable world

### 2.1.3 Role Players

The implementation of parliamentary international relations is directed by the Parliamentary Group on International Relations (PGIR), the Joint Rules Committee, Presiding Officers, the House Chairperson on International Relations in both Houses of Parliament and MPs. Administrative support is provided by the Secretary to Parliament through the International Relations and Protocol Division (IRPD).

## 2.2 National Foreign Policy Imperatives

South Africa's national foreign policy objectives are informed by the following key principles:

- A commitment to the promotion of human rights;
- A commitment to the promotion of democracy;
- A commitment to justice and international law in the conduct of relations between nations;
- A commitment to international peace and to internationally agreed upon mechanisms for the resolution of conflicts;
- A commitment to Africa in world affairs;
- A commitment to economic development through regional and international cooperation in an interdependent (and globalised) world.

In the context of these principles, the following key priorities have been identified:

- **Consolidation of the African Agenda** – This entails the restructuring of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) organs to enable it to function more effectively, the strengthening of the African Union's (AU) organs and structures, the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), and ensuring peace, stability and security in Africa.
- **South-South cooperation** – South-South cooperation is a conscious initiative by countries of the South to address the challenges of underdevelopment, as well as economic and political marginalisation through partnership. South Africa views its partnership with countries of the South as critical for advancing the African Agenda.
- **North-South dialogue** – Existing global imbalances which favour countries of the North compel the South to engage these well-resourced countries as partners. South Africa engages at the highest level with developed nations to address the challenges posed by poverty and underdevelopment, inequalities within the global system, unequal exercise of global power, and the existing economic and trade imbalances.
- **Global governance** – Global changes have brought issues of economics and development to the centre stage of international relations. South Africa's security, the well-being of its people and international peace are all linked to economic growth. Therefore, favourably positioning South Africa in the regional and world economy is a central part of the country's foreign policy. Furthermore, as a member of the AU, South



Africa supports and contributes to African efforts to reform the UN, in particular the Security Council.

The above core principles and priorities have informed Parliament's proposed approach and programmes in the area of international relations.

## **2.3 Core Objectives of Parliament's International Relations**

Parliament has pursued certain core objectives that reflect broad good practice in international affairs. These are encapsulated in its commitment to:

- prioritising Africa;
- advancing multilateralism;
- establishing bilateral relations for strategic reasons;
- ensuring follow-up at parliament-to-parliament level (bilateralism) on the Government's international involvement or engagement, particularly in Africa;
- facilitating public participation;
- promoting and protecting human rights;
- reinforcing democratic values and ideals;
- advocating gender justice;
- promoting activism;
- upholding international law and justice;
- strengthening South-South cooperation;
- initiating and strengthening interaction and dialogue between North and South; and
- initiating contact with other parliaments.

### **2.3.1 Guidelines on Programme of Action**

The following measures have been identified as possible Programmes of Action:

#### ***Developing and Strengthening Partnerships in Africa***

Parliament, in line with the country's foreign policy, should give special attention to Africa in its overall international relations policy framework. This would include engaging proactively with some of the legislative assemblies of countries where the South African government has been involved in peace-building efforts. Parliament should therefore proactively design an international relations policy framework in which it undertakes to engage, on a parliament-to-parliament basis, with its counterparts from African countries that are emerging from conflicts in general, and those where the Government of South Africa has been involved in particular.

#### ***Advancing Multilateralism***

The main objective is to consolidate and strengthen the role of Parliament in international co-operations and to make rules-based contributions to the democratisation of global system of governance. Therefore, the policy should be ensuring that global international institutions such as the IPU and CPA are restructured so that they become strong instruments to amplify the voice of the South with the North formations and land their support to the efforts that seek to promote the development of the South and thereby counter its marginalization.

**The IPU noted that parliamentarians must contribute to the design of a new system of global governance which is better attuned to the deeper aspirations of the citizens. There is a need to ensure much closer parliamentary interaction with the international financial institutions in a bid to exercise greater parliamentary oversight.**

The Policy Perspectives review should provide an alternative voice in advocating for the transformation of institutions of global governance such as UN Reform and the transformation of parliamentary institutions such as Pan African Parliament, IPU, SADC-PC and CPA.

The review process must help to strength parliament conduct of parliamentary diplomacy to respond to the current challenge compounding countries at regional, continental and global level of rebuilding economies in the post COVID 19 and further respond to another ongoing pandemic of gender based violence.

Through South African Parliament`s involvement and participation in the IPU, efforts are made towards findings means and ways to reform the institutions of global governance such as the UN, WTO and Brettenwoods Institutions, especially on the aspects of governance and management of these institutions. The reform of these institutions needs to be expedited as it is imperative to respond to the needs and challenges faced by the developing countries.

By and large the views of the developing countries are not represented in the international of global governance given current form representation which favours developed countries. Parliament as an institution that represents the people needs to strengthen its role and strategic posture towards adding its voice to these global realities. Our commitment to the restructuring of international institutions of governance ultimately aimed at bringing about a more democratic world order that truly reflects our reality in the twenty-first century.

Evolving international structures have imposed a heightened responsibility on MPs, in view of their oversight role, to interact with one another on matters such as respect for the rule of law, human rights, and their governments` transparency and accountability. Parliament`s affiliation to various multilateral forums therefore provides platforms for engagement with other counterparts on issues of national and international interests. These include the exchange of experiences in addressing domestic developmental challenges, as well as developing mechanisms that parliaments can use to strengthen their functioning according to international best practice.

### ***Bilateralism through friendship societies***

Parliament should, in the initial stages, focus on building bilateral relations with other legislative bodies through proactively forming "friendship groups", as this seems to be a flexible way of building towards formal and established relations. Parliament should therefore establish guidelines to determine which countries it wishes to establish such friendship groups with and how they will operate.

### ***Providing for public input***

Parliament should make provision, through the relevant offices, committees and other mechanisms, to ensure that there is ongoing engagement with the public on important international relations issues, in line with the vision and programmes of Parliament. Parliament has been particularly active in various multilateral forums, yet its participation has not been popularised with the South African public. Parliament therefore needs to consider how it can inform South Africans about its international participation and its impact on the country.

## **CHAPTER 3: PARTICIPATION OF PARLIAMENT IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

The South African Parliament engages in international relations using two separate mechanisms: (a) the traditional mechanism and (b) parliamentary diplomacy. The traditional mechanism used by Parliament to engage in international relations is the parliamentary committees dealing with foreign affairs, that is, the Portfolio Committee on International Relations and Cooperation and the Select Committee on Trade and International Relations. Both these committees oversee the work of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) by monitoring its budget, holding hearings on pertinent international relations matters and engaging in site visits, amongst others.

The second mechanism used to engage in international relations is parliamentary diplomacy, which operates outside the realm of mainstream international policies and can be regarded as an alternative, parallel foreign relations area amongst legislative counterparts. This mechanism encompasses bilateral and multilateral international relations activities, which the PGIR coordinates and oversees.

### **3.1 Bilateral Relations**

The South African Parliament formally cooperates with other individual parliaments with the purpose of reinforcing democratic values and ideals; promoting and protecting human rights; promoting women's emancipation; and upholding international law. Formal bilateral cooperation is conducted through strategic partnerships, friendship groups, and memoranda of understanding (MoUs).

Equally, Parliament strives to enhance bilateral cooperation with other parliaments by establishing Strategic Partnerships, a Network Group, and Friendship Groups. The purpose of these bilateral relations are to build strategic relations, lobby support for South African policy/strategic positions and to speak in one voice on issues of common interest that will benefit the African Continent and developing countries. In practice, Parliament's bilateral relations are conducted through official visits, courtesy call meetings, and study visits by Committees of Parliament. To date, Parliament has signed MoU's on Exchange Mechanisms with China, Mozambique, Vietnam and the Russian Federation.

The following countries have been identified for bilateral cooperation in Africa: Angola, Namibia and Mozambique (SADC); Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Burundi and Rwanda (East Africa); Nigeria, Algeria, Cote D'Ivoire, Ghana and Senegal (West Africa); and Tunisia, Libya and Egypt (North Africa). These States have been identified based on the strength of their contribution to the economic development of the African Continent and their ability to share experiences. However,

Parliament needs to be mindful of the democratisation challenges currently being experienced by these States.

In the South, bilateral relations could be established with the respective parliaments of the BRICS, namely Brazil, Russia, India, China, with the objective of formalising the already existing cooperation and membership of those bodies at parliamentary level. The main objective would be sharing information and best practices to forge common positions.

Bilateral cooperation with the North also entails sharing experiences, whilst sensitising developed countries to the growing marginalisation of the developing world in the global system of governance.

### **3.1.1 Strategic Partnerships**

Strategic Partnerships are to be established to advance and maintain stronger bilateral relations with other parliaments, such as parliaments of those countries that the South African Government has strategic relations with, in line with Government foreign policy.

This partnership would be based on the recognition of mutual interests of both partners in many areas of common concern that may require joint positions, actions, and/or policy coordination. The SA-EU meetings based on the Joint Declaration on the Strengthening of Inter-Parliamentary Relations and Political Dialogue in February 2008 is an example of a strategic partnership. South Africa signed the Joint Declaration in February 2008 for the two legislatures to ensure effective oversight of the South Africa-European Union (EU) Strategic Partnership Joint Action Plan, signed in May 2007.

The EU is South Africa's largest trading block partner and its main source of foreign direct investment. South Africa is also the EU's main African partner and the only country in Africa identified as one of nine strategic partners of the EU worldwide. The legal basis for relations between South Africa and the EU is the Trade Development and Cooperation Agreement (TDCA), which covers political dialogue, trade, development and economic cooperation. This agreement was enhanced by the signing of the Strategic Partnership Joint Action Plan, which sought to transform existing cooperation agreements from political dialogue into active political cooperation at bilateral, regional, continental and global levels.

### **3.1.2 Network Group**

A number of networks and voluntary associations exist. This is indicative of the multiplicity of actors in international affairs and changes taking place in societies. Many of these networks and voluntary associations have MPs who participate in their activities. It is important that such interaction takes place in a coordinated manner.

The focus of the Network Group will be to facilitate and encourage dialogue between MPs and the international volunteering associations and networks, providing coordinated parliamentary advocacy on relevant issues, networking and reinforcing cooperation between parliaments, academic communities, civil society, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

### **3.1.3 Friendship Groups**

Friendship Groups is a sub-structure of the PGIR. Their purpose is to foster informal political dialogue with other parliaments to pursue non-strategic bilateral relations. These exchange delegations will help enhance understanding and cooperation in legislative affairs. They will meet with MPs of visiting parliamentary delegations and other distinguished visitors of relevance to the Groups, as well as with diplomatic representatives of the countries concerned.

The Friendship Groups will also have the opportunity to meet with their counterparts on missions abroad. Each Friendship Group will have a country that they will interact with.

The countries will be identified by the PGIR, in line with the Government's foreign policy.

### **3.2 Multilateral Relations**

Parliament, as guided by South Africa's foreign policy, actively participates in various regional, continental and international multilateral forums. These include the Southern African Development Community Parliamentary Forum (SADC-PF), the Pan African Parliament (PAP), the African, Caribbean and Pacific-European Union Joint Parliamentary Assembly (ACP-EU JPA), the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), the BRICS Parliamentary Forum, the IBSA Parliamentary Forum, GLOBE International, the Association of Senates, Shoora, and Equivalent Councils in Africa and the Arab World (ASSECA), and the Crans Montana Forum. Parliament's affiliation to and participation in these forums normally results in commitments that require domestic application.

#### **3.2.1 The SADC-PF**

The SADC-PF is a regional organisation comprising 14 SADC member parliaments. The SADC-PF strives to involve the people and parties in the SADC in the region's integration process. Among other things, it aims to strengthen the implementation capacity of SADC by involving parliamentarians in SADC activities and promoting the principles of human rights and democracy. The SADC-PF is considered as one of the most important structures in the region, as it brings national parliaments together across party lines. The SADC-PF is also striving to become a fully-fledged regional parliament, but faces challenges in achieving this. During the 5<sup>th</sup> Parliament, both Houses of the South African Parliament formally agreed to a motion in support of the SADC-PF's transformation into a regional parliament.

#### **3.2.2 The PAP**

The PAP is an organ of the African Union (AU), established on 18 March 2004 in terms of Article 17 of the Constitutive Act of the AU as one of the nine organs provided for in the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community, signed in Abuja, Nigeria, in 1991. The seat of the PAP is in Midrand, South Africa. The key objectives of the PAP are to ensure full participation of the people of Africa in governance, democratic principles and economic integration of the Continent. The PAP currently exercises advisory and consultative powers. The ultimate aim is for it to evolve into a fully-fledged legislative organ whose members are elected by universal adult suffrage. The establishment of the PAP is informed by a vision to provide a common platform for the African people and their grassroots organisations to be more involved in discussions and decisions on the problems and challenges facing the Continent.

### **3.2.3 The ACP-EU JPA**

The Cotonou Partnership Agreement is the most comprehensive partnership agreement between developing countries and the European Union (EU). Since 2000, it has been the framework for the EU's relations with the 79-member African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries. The Agreement is based on three pillars – development co-operation, trade and political dialogue. The Agreement gives effect to a number of ACP and EU institutions, as well as joint ACP-EU institutions to engage on matters of mutual concern. Among these is the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly, also known as the ACP-EU JPA. In the absence of a parliament, the JPA meets twice a year in plenary session, alternately in the EU and in an ACP State.

The ACP-EU JPA is a democratic, parliamentary institution which aims to promote relations between the North and the South. This is done through deliberations pertaining to issues of mutual interest in relation to political affairs, economic development, finance, trade, social affairs and the environment. The work of the institution is divided between three committees, namely, the Committee on Political Affairs; Committee on Economic Development, Finance and Trade; and Committee on Social Affairs and the Environment.

### **3.2.4 The CPA**

The CPA is an association of parliamentarians in the Commonwealth who are united by “a community of interest, respect for the rule of law, and individual rights and freedoms, and by the pursuit of the positive ideals of parliamentary democracy”. The strategic vision of the CPA is characterised by democratic values, which encompass human rights, global peace and security, sustainable development, poverty eradication and gender equality and women’s emancipation. As is the case with many international organisations, the CPA is confronted with transformational challenges. The most critical issue for South Africa is the transformation of the status of the CPA from a charity to a diplomatic organisation. As a charity registered in the United Kingdom (UK), it is subject to the laws of the UK and it raises questions about how public funds from sovereign Commonwealth countries can go to a charity based in the UK.

### **3.2.5 The IPU**

The IPU was established in 1889 as an association of individual parliamentarians. Since then it has transformed into an international organisation of Parliaments of sovereign States, working for peace and co-operation among people and the firm establishment of representative democracy. Furthermore, it is the only organisation that represents the legislative branch of States on a global scale. It currently comprises 162 member States and 10 associate members. The IPU has six main areas of activity: representative democracy; international peace and security; sustainable development; human rights and humanitarian law; women in politics; and education, science and culture.

The Statutes define the IPU as the international organisation of the parliaments of sovereign States. States, such as the United States where the IPU has an office and Switzerland where the IPU headquarters are based, recognise the IPU as an international organisation. However, not all States recognise the IPU as an international organisation, even though the IPU has a legal persona that allows it to act in the international arena. It concludes agreements with parliaments in organising conferences. It receives grants and implements projects under formal agreements to

which it is a party. As long as the existence of the IPU is not based on an international convention, it will continue to be recognised as an actor in the international field without the status of an international organisation.

The challenge for IPU Member States is to conclude an international convention that confers the formal status of an international organisation upon the IPU. In so doing, the IPU will be emulating the practice of other major organisations that were established on the basis of international conventions.

### **3.2.6 Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa Parliamentary Forum**

The Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa (BRICS) Parliamentary Forum (BRICS-PF) is an important forum of emerging markets that South Africa joined in 2010. It focuses on establishing economic cooperation amongst member States. South Africa attended the BRICS First Parliamentary Forum on 8 June 2015 in Moscow, Russia, during which the role of the BRICS parliaments were discussed in resolving urgent international problems and making the BRICS a full-scale tool for strategic and up-to-date collaboration on key issues of global politics and economy. In order to further deepen the strategic partnership between the BRICS countries, participants of the Forum declared their intention to strengthen and promote contacts at the leadership level of relevant chambers, committees and groups of parliamentarians, perform inter-parliamentary exchanges and hold regular expert consultations, create and develop new inter-parliamentary cooperation mechanisms, including through the use of modern information technologies and creation of sections on the inter-parliamentary dimension on the websites of the highest legislative bodies of the BRICS.

The strengthening of South-South parliamentary relations has developed into high level intercontinental engagements for the strengthening of solidarity, economic development interdependence among the developing countries in an effort to address common socio-economic challenges related to poverty, education, health, population, environment concerns, women and children rights, etc.

The foreign policy priority of strengthening the political interests in the global south have been expanded through the formation of BRICS which is premised on enhancing development, alleviate poverty and inequality through strengthening the economies of developing countries in the global South. Parliaments Policy Review and Guidelines in the International Relations must reflect this in both policy content and activities at International fora.

BRICS serve as multiplier in positively influencing the global economic and governance structures. It places people`s agenda at the centre of global development agenda and focus on addressing the triple challenges of poverty, inequality and unemployment.

### **3.2.7 India, Brazil and South Africa Parliamentary Forum**

The India, Brazil and South Africa Parliamentary Forum (IBSA-PF) is a trilateral development initiative aimed at promoting South-South cooperation, as well as the exchange of ideas and best practices. The primary objectives of IBSA-PF are as follows:

- Oversee and monitor the implementation of decisions adopted during the IBSA Summit of Heads of State and Government and Ministerial Meetings;
- Strengthen people-to-people contact with a view to achieving mutual understanding, trust and friendship among the people of the member countries;
- Further cement friendly relations among the member countries;
- Strengthen and deepen South-South cooperation;
- Promote, contact, co-ordinate and exchange experiences among Parliaments and parliamentarians of the member countries;
- Provide for the exchange of ideas and information on parliamentary practices and procedures;
- Cooperate in international fora on matters of common interest.

### **3.2.8 Global Legislators' Organisation International (GLOBE)**

The Global Legislators' Organisation (GLOBE) International was founded in 1989 by legislators from the United States Congress, European Parliament, Japanese Diet and the Russian State Duma. Its objective is to respond to urgent environmental challenges by coordinating national policy measures and advancing complementary legislation through the following:

- Supporting ambitious political leadership on issues of climate and energy security, land-use change and ecosystems;
- Facilitating high level negotiated policy positions from leading legislators representing Parliaments from the major economies and from regional dialogues;
- Providing a unique opportunity for legislators to work together outside the formal international negotiations to push the boundaries of what can be politically achieved;
- Facilitating regional policy dialogues amongst legislators, as GLOBE believes that legislators have a critical role to play in holding their own governments to account for the commitments that are made during international negotiations; and
- Strengthening legislative action on climate change by developing a set of legislative principles and by supporting GLOBE chapters in advancing such principles in their respective Parliaments.

It is particularly the supporting role that GLOBE provides to its members (chapters) on environmental matters, specifically climate change, that appeals to the South African Parliament. The South African Parliament agreed to the establishment of a GLOBE Chapter in Parliament in June 2011, upon the adoption of the "Report of the Parliamentary Delegation to the 16<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties (COP16) Meeting held in Cancun, Mexico, from 29 November to 10 December 2010". Both Houses recognised that the GLOBE Chapter would play a critical role in strengthening legislative action on climate change in Parliament and hence assist MPs to adequately scrutinise executive programmes on climate change. It became increasingly clearer to Parliament that it stands to benefit much from acceding to the membership of GLOBE through the organisation's numerous capacity-building initiatives that it undertakes to empower and sharpen the legislative focus of MPs on climate change and other contentious environmental issues.

### **3.2.9 Association of Senates, Shoora and Equivalent Councils in Africa and the Arab World (ASSECAA)**

The Association was established on 7 June 2002 in Rabat (Morocco) and seeks to establish a bridge of cooperation between Africa and the Arab World. Its objectives are to strengthen



parliamentary bicameral systems; to reinforce economic, political, cultural cooperation and security among the people it represents to support and join Arab, African and international parliamentary efforts; to contribute to the parliamentary activities of the Arab, African and International Parliamentary Unions; as well as to engage in dialogues emanating from them with the purpose of supporting these efforts to achieve the objectives of the Association.

Membership of the Association is open to all African and Arab Senates and Second Chambers that request participation as full members. The National Council of Provinces (NCOP) is a Member of the Association and the delegation that participates in the activities/conferences of the Association is led by the Chairperson of the NCOP. The Deputy Chairperson of the NCOP has been instrumental in promoting gender issues, in line with South Africa's policies on gender representation (50-50 representation), and on women's emancipation in Africa and the globe.

### **3.2.10 The Crans Montana Forum**

The Crans Montana Forum (CMF) is a Swiss international organisation created in Crans Montana (Switzerland) in 1996. The overarching aim of the CMF is to promote international cooperation and to contribute towards global growth in a manner that ensures stability, equity and security. Since its establishment, the CMF has strived to maintain and foster close associations with key government and business leaders, as well as various international organisations. In this regard, the international organisations that the CMF has formed associations with include the United Nations; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation; the European Union; the South African Development Community; and the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) Fund for International Development. The CMF has also welcomed a number of major corporations and even small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) representing all strategic sectors, including energy, mining, ICT [in full first], banking, defence and security, such as the Dangote Group, Total, Siemens, Transnet Limited, Microsoft, Orange and BP as industry partners.

Key activities of the CMF include the forums that it organises and hosts, such as the Annual Forum, the New Leaders for Tomorrow Forum and the CMF Club of Ports. Attendance at CMF forums is prioritised by high level business and government leaders, as it not only presents an opportunity for these business and government leaders to articulate and promote their strategies, but also provides an opportunity for them to strengthen their existing relationships and partnerships and establish new relationships, partnerships and cooperation agreements. In sum, the forums of the CMF are aimed at ensuring global dialogue and fostering best practice around varying global issues. What further makes CMF forums unique is that they do not permit press coverage in order to preserve the freedom and quality of the exchanges that take place. In fact, the tone of each forum of the CMF is intended to be intimate and responsive and, as such, free from protocol restraint. In addition, the agenda of each of the various CFM forums is structured in a manner that allows for freedom of speech, expression and spontaneity.

### **3.3 Hosting International Relations Conferences and Seminars**

The IRPD will actively host conferences and seminars to augment its knowledge on matters of parliamentary diplomacy. The hosting of such events will provide the Division an opportunity to share information, experiences, challenges and solutions with international relations experts.

## **CHAPTER 4: WOMEN AND YOUTH PARLIAMENTARIANS IN INTER-PARLIAMENTARY RELATIONS**

### **4.1 The Role of Women in Gender Mainstreaming and Women Empowerment**

Gender equality constitutes a fundamental of human rights matter. It has captured the interest and imagination of many development institutions in the last 30 years. This includes, for instance, the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality 2005 – 2015 (PoA), which draws on international commitment for the realisation of women's rights enshrined in the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Platform for Action, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and other agreements on health and education targets. The MDGs and the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development have been instrumental catalysts to increase the representation of women in leadership roles and decision-making positions, and the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will continue to build on the efforts made under the MDGs.

Despite these initiatives, a range of challenges to gender equality and women's empowerment remain. These include a lack of gender balance in decision-making positions in government. According to the Commonwealth Secretariat (2011), women continue to be under-represented in national parliaments, and the share of women among Ministers averages at 19 per cent. The highest positions, i.e. Heads of State positions, are even more elusive. The under-representation of women is mostly symptomatic of persistent gender stereotypes, patriarchy and the lack of an enabling political environment, inadequate funding to support female candidates, the absence of special measures/quotas, low literacy levels, the lack of job security in politics, the absence of female role models and a lack of training for political participants. In addition, most women are still faced with unequal access to economic and environmental resources, as well as social and legal aid/assistance, bear a disproportionate burden of unpaid work; and violence against women, which is not only a violation of basic rights but also hinders women's economic and political empowerment. These challenges hinder progress for women, their families and countries. In the poorest countries, and in settings affected by violent conflict or natural disasters, gender inequalities often increase and their negative impacts on development are exacerbated.

In the context of gender empowerment, mainstreaming and emancipation, Parliament is committed to ensuring that it extends its support and commitment to all activities pertaining to women. In this regard, Parliament hosts the Women's Parliament, which has become an annual event since its inception in 2004. It affords women from the nine provinces the opportunity to come to Parliament and engage their elected representatives on issues that are important to women. Furthermore, Parliament established the Multiparty Women's Caucus, which acts as an advisory, influencing and consultative body. This is done by, among others, representing the interests and concerns of women MPs in Parliament and the Portfolio Committee on Women which, among others, oversees the Commission for Gender Equality. The Commission is responsible for, among others, monitoring compliance with international conventions, covenants and charters related to gender issues, and to submit reports to Parliament in this regard.

South African women MPs actively participate in the women's structures of all the international parliamentary bodies the institution is affiliated to. These include the SADC-PF Regional Women's Parliamentary Caucus (RWPC), the PAP Women's Caucus, the IPU Meeting of

Women Parliamentarians, the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, and the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP).

- **SADC-PF RWPC:** All women MPs of the SADC-PF are members of the RWPC. Their primary focus has been to advocate and lobby for the 50/50% representation of women in decision-making positions by 2015, as provided for in the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development. In addition, they also discuss other pertinent issues relating to the welfare and empowerment of women in the SADC Region.
- **PAP Women's Caucus:** All women MPs of the PAP are members of the PAP Women's Caucus. This Caucus' objectives are to:
  - o Contribute to greater participation of women in political, economic, social and cultural life across the African Continent.
  - o Establish and strengthen the exchange of experience and at the sub-regional, regional and global levels for the defence of human rights in general and the rights of women and children in particular.
  - o Strengthen the intervention capacities of members of the caucus in accordance with their missions.
  - o Contribute to the promotion and defence of the principles of human rights in general and gender parity in particular, as well as good governance, democracy, peace and security.
  - o Establish a data bank for members' use for greater efficiency in their activities.
- **IPU Meeting of Women Parliamentarians:** Women members of national Parliaments who have been designated as delegates to the statutory IPU Meetings under the IPU's provisions may take part in the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians. This Meeting aims to:
  - o Promote an increase in the number of women MPs as delegates to Inter-Parliamentary Meetings;
  - o Allow women to learn more about the status of women in their own and other regions and about strategies or mechanisms developed by other countries to meet the concerns of women;
  - o Promote greater participation of women MPs in all senior posts of the Union;
  - o Establish contact with other women MPs, whether or not they participate in IPU meetings;
  - o Pre-study items on the agenda of each of the IPU Conferences from the perspective of women legislators in order to develop strategies to make their delegations receptive to their concerns and to promote their objectives in the plenary sittings of the Conference and Committees; and
  - o Identify suitable subjects for study by the Inter-Parliamentary Conference.
- **United Nations Commission on the Status of Women:** The South African Parliament is a regular participant in the United Nations' Sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women. The Commission on the Status of Women ("CSW" or "the Commission") is a functional commission of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). It is the principal global policy-making body dedicated exclusively to gender equality and the advancement of women. Every year, representatives of Member States gather at the United Nations Headquarters in New York to evaluate progress on gender equality, identify challenges, set global standards and formulate concrete policies to promote

gender equality and women's empowerment worldwide. Following the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women, the General Assembly mandated the Commission to integrate into its programme a follow-up process to the Conference, regularly reviewing the critical areas of concern in the Beijing Platform for Action and to develop its catalytic role in mainstreaming a gender perspective in United Nations activities.

- **CWP:** The CWP was founded by women delegates at the 1989 plenary conference. The aim was to enable women at future conferences to discuss ways to increase female representation in Parliament and work towards the mainstreaming of gender in all CPA activities and programmes. In 2004, the group was formally recognised in the CPA Constitution and its elected Chairperson added to the CPA Executive Committee. The Constitution of the CPA requires all branches to establish CWP chapters at both international and regional level as a structure responsible for furthering the objectives of the CWP strategy. Accordingly, the CWP is established at International level, as well as at regional level, with regional chapters of the CWP operating with their own steering committees and programme of activities. The Regional Representative of the CWP also receives a separate invitation to attend CPA conferences.

## 4.2 The Need for Youth Empowerment

Youth development in all world regions continues to be constrained by persistent obstacles at the community, national and international levels. In some regions, large numbers of youth have not attained the levels of education that would enable them to compete effectively in the labour market. In other regions, youth have attained high levels of education but cannot find jobs because of a mismatch between the knowledge and skills they've acquired and those needed in a changing labour market. In all regions, globalisation and changing labour markets have caused opportunities in the labour market for youth to shrink. In the sub-Saharan region, the following challenges persist:

- Poverty, which entails nutritional deprivation, lack of access to service delivery (i.e. electricity and access to water);
- Low school enrolment rates, especially for girls, which makes it more difficult for them to access the workplace and transition into independent adulthood.
- Increased HIV and tuberculosis (TB) infections despite improved access to treatment.
- Exposure to violence and conflicts, where they are not only victims but are frequently recruited into militias and armies that have perpetrated violence.

Because of these challenges, African governments are increasingly putting in place national youth policies and mechanisms aimed at supporting the well-being of young people. However, much remains to be done to advance a comprehensive approach to youth development. In 1995, the United Nations strengthened its commitment to the youth of the world by adopting the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond (WPAY). Its main objective was to effectively address the problems of young people and to increase the opportunities for the participation of youth in society. The WPAY provided a policy framework and practical guidelines for national Governments and regional organisations to improve the situation of youth within countries and regions.

In addition, in July 2006, AU Head of States and Governments meeting in Banjul, Gambia, endorsed the African Youth Charter (AYC). The Charter is a political and legal document which serves as the strategic framework that gives direction for youth empowerment and development

at continental, regional and national levels. The AYC aims to strengthen, reinforce and consolidate efforts to empower young people through meaningful youth participation and equal partnership in driving Africa's development agenda. As a signatory country, the South African Government has to ensure that in terms of the development and implementation of a youth policy, attention is paid to the regional obligations that are enforceable under the AYC.

Parliaments and MPs have been advancing Governments' efforts through various domestic mechanisms and parliamentary multilateral platforms they are affiliated to. Current mechanisms of the South African Parliament include the annual Youth Parliament, which Parliament has been hosting since 1997. It is an initiative to afford young people the opportunity to voice their concerns, and to bring the key issues that affect the lives of young people to the attention of MPs. It also serves as a mechanism to involve the youth in debating contemporary issues facing young people. The Youth Parliament takes place annually with other Youth Day activities in commemoration of the events of 16 June 1976.

Parliament, through its participation in the following multilateral platforms, attempts to ensure the realisation of youth rights enshrined in the African Youth Charter:

- **SADC-PF Regional Youth Caucus:** The 24th Plenary Assembly, in November 2008, noted that youth are the most affected by nearly all of the challenges faced by the region, including post-elections violence, xenophobia, crime, violence against women, HIV and AIDS and unemployment. In light of this, the Plenary Assembly resolved to create a Regional Youth Parliamentary Caucus, which would aim to motivate and increase the youth's direct participation in legislative issues in the SADC region, as well as at national Parliament level. Given that the Caucus is yet to be established, this could be a matter that the South African delegation to the SADC-PF could consider reviving.
- **PAP Youth Caucus:** The Pan African Parliament approved a motion in 2012 for the creation of a Youth Caucus intended to strengthen and consolidate efforts to empower young people in Africa. The Pan African Parliament Youth Caucus will work along with civil society and other relevant stakeholders within AU Member States to facilitate the ratification and implementation of the African Youth Charter. The Caucus will also liaise with the Pan African Parliament Committee on Youth activities in working with parliaments of member countries to drive the youth development agenda in keeping with the African Youth Charter.
- **IPU Forum of Young Parliamentarians:** The IPU's Governing Council endorsed a proposal to create the Forum of Young Parliamentarians in October 2013, dedicated to enhancing the quantitative and qualitative participation of youth in parliaments and in the IPU. The objectives of the Forum are as follows:
  - Broaden diversity and inclusivity by increasing the presence of young parliamentarians at IPU Assemblies and meetings;
  - Strengthen the added value of youth in the IPU by incorporating a youth perspective in the IPU's agenda and work and building bridges between the IPU and youth organisations;
  - Achieve better parliaments and stronger democracies by promoting youth participation in parliaments and reaching out to young people involved in politics; and

- Ensure better follow-up and implementation of decisions and recommendations contained in the IPU resolution on "Youth participation in the democratic process", adopted by the 122<sup>nd</sup> Assembly in Bangkok.
- **CPA Youth Programme:** The CPA Secretariat celebrates Commonwealth Day (the second Monday in March) with a programme towards the Commonwealth's young citizens. The one-day programme remains one of the most popular in the CPA's calendar. The day includes:
- Discussions on the Commonwealth and specifically on the CPA and its contribution to parliamentary democracy – the CPA has obtained the services of visiting and UK Parliamentarians to help with these discussions;
  - Short debates or other presentations on current critical issues in the Commonwealth; and
  - Attendance at the Observance at Westminster Abbey at which will be present Her Majesty The Queen as Head of the Commonwealth and all Commonwealth High Commissioners in London.

CPA Branches are invited to nominate a maximum of two young people, ideally one male, and one female, to attend the Programme. Nominees are within the approximate age range of 18-25 and have shown an interest in Commonwealth and parliamentary affairs, displayed potential leadership qualities and (except in special instances) already have planned to be in London on Commonwealth Day.

## **CHAPTER 5: OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR INVOLVEMENT AND ENGAGEMENT IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

### **5.1 Parliamentary Group on International Relations**

The PGIR was established in 2009. Its role is to implement Parliament's international relations policy, as agreed by the Joint Rules, through the following:

- Providing policy and strategic direction on Parliament's international engagements, including its relations with other Parliaments and international parliamentary organisations;
- Coordinating Parliament's international engagements, including its relations with other Parliaments and membership of, and participation in, international parliamentary organisations;
- Receiving reports from parliamentary delegations and submitting proposals on their tabling, referral and scheduling for debate to the Presiding Officers or relevant parliamentary structures; and
- Meeting annually with Members appointed by the Houses to serve in international parliamentary bodies and Members of all sub-structures of the group, as well as the chairpersons of the parliamentary committees dealing with international relations and cooperation and trade and industry. The aim of these meetings is to determine strategy and evaluate the international relations of Parliament.

#### **5.1.1 Roles of PGIR Chairpersons**

**The House Chairperson: International Relations in National Assembly** has the following functions:

- Implementing Parliament's International Relations Strategy;
- Directing the formulation of international relations policy and guiding its implementation;
- Monitoring the travel policy for parliamentary delegations;
- Attending to parliamentary international obligations on behalf of the Speaker;
- Chairing and co-ordinating the PGIR;
- Facilitating public participation in the adoption of international instruments; and
- Overseeing the functioning of the International Relations [and Protocol Division].

**The House Chairperson on International Relations and Members' Support in the National Council of Provinces** has the following functions:

- Present reports to the Programme Committee regarding the impact of international agreements on provinces;
- Co-chair the PGIR and provide reports to the Presiding Officers;
- Provide policy and strategic direction with other Parliaments and international parliamentary organisations;
- Receive reports from delegations and submitting proposals on tabling, referral and scheduling for debate to the presiding officers or relevant parliamentary structures;
- Meet bi-annually with delegates who serve in parliamentary bodies, as well as the chairpersons of the parliamentary committees dealing with international relations, trade and industry to determine strategy and evaluate the international relations of the Council;
- Facilitate the participation of NCOP delegates in international forums;
- Ensure the implementation of policies relating to Members' Facilities;
- Co-ordinate NCOP activities on public education and public participation;
- Monitor and report on policies on ICT, artwork management, library and exhibitions; and
- Perform any function that the Chairperson of the Council or House may from time to time assign to her.

### **5.1.2 The PGIR Chairpersons' relationship with the Joint Rules Committee**

The PGIR is a sub-structure of the Joint Rules Committee, and must therefore report to it on its activities on a regular basis. The Joint Rules Committee is co-chaired by the Speaker of the NA and the Chairperson of the NCOP. The Joint Rules Committee consists of the Rules Committees of the NA and NCOP.

### **5.1.3 The PGIR Chairpersons' relationship with the Joint Programme Committee**

The Joint Programme Committee comprises the NA Programme Committee and the NCOP Programme Committee sitting jointly. The work of the NA and NCOP Programme Committees therefore feeds into the work of the Joint Programme Committee. The Joint Programme Committee only comprises the Presiding Officers and Whips and therefore excludes the House Chairperson: Committees of both Houses. However, the Programme Committee of each House is chaired by the Speaker in the NA and the Chairperson of the NCOP, and they jointly chair the Joint Programme Committee, which prepares and adjusts the annual programme of Parliament and may take decisions and issue directives and guidelines to prioritise any joint business of the Houses. The Presiding Officers, due to their chairpersonship of both the Joint Rules and Joint Programme Committees, play a central role in the structures of Parliament that facilitate

the work of the PGIR. Figure 2 below illustrates the cross-cutting relationships between these structures involved in the work of the PGIR

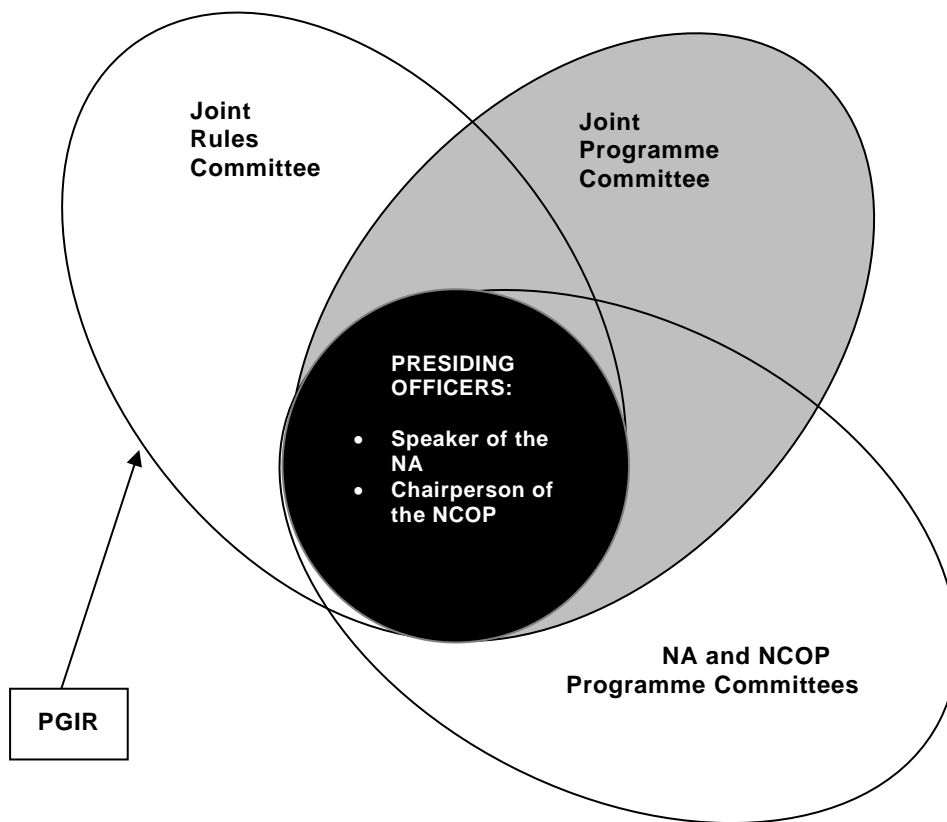


Fig.2: The cross-cutting relationship between the stakeholders involved in the work of the PGIR

#### 5.1.4 Roles of Focus Groups

The Focus Groups are sub-structures of the PGIR. The rationale underlying the establishment of the Focus Groups was to create a mechanism to strategise and accelerate the programme of action of multilateral bodies that Parliament is affiliated to. The main purpose of the Focus Groups is to ensure action is taken to implement the recommendations and resolutions of such bodies. Each group would have to also establish a parliamentary index of core areas of intervention in order to clearly demonstrate what is lacking and what can be strengthened for each parliamentary body. Each group is to have a convener, meet immediately after an international engagement to discuss its report for tabling to the PGIR, and meet as and when the need arises to discuss current topics and/or challenges. The following Focus Groups were established in 2010:

- SADC-PF
- PAP
- CPA
- IPU
- ACP-EU JPA
- IBSA Parliamentary Forum



- SA-EU
- ASSECA

#### 5.1.4.1 Role of the Convener

The convener of each Focus Group has the following duties:

- Call regular Focus Group meetings, either on a fixed schedule or as needed, to prepare the mandates of delegations and adopt delegation reports prior to submission to the PGIR.
- Prepare an agenda for each meeting and communicate it to members before the next meeting.
- Clarify roles and assign these to support staff serving the Focus Group.
- Keep a record of the agendas and minutes of each meeting.
- Prepare a set of goals for the Focus Group for the calendar year in order to accomplish the work that needs to be done.
- If there are regular duties to be performed, prepare a time line so that everyone will know what is due when.
- Determine what skills Focus Group members possess and use them to accomplish the Focus Group's goals.
- Prepare and present an annual report of the Focus Group's work for the year and send it to the PGIR for consideration.

#### 5.1.5 Composition of delegations

According to the Announcements, Tablings and Committee Reports (ATC) of Parliament, dated 13 October 2009, the principles underpinning the composition of delegations are as follows:

- The proportional representation of parties serves as the basis for determining the composition of delegations;
- The formulae are also based on the premise that the ANC, as the majority party, should comprise at least 50% + 1 of any delegation (except delegations of two).
- Each delegation must be reasonably representative in terms of gender and disability.
- Subject to the agreed formulae, a Member's inclusion in a delegation could be linked to the level of participation of the Member's relevant committee's activities, with due consideration of the difficulties faced by some of the smaller parties who have Members serving on many committees.
- Parties decide who will represent them in a delegation.

The composition of delegations, based on the formulae agreed by the Second Parliament and adjusted according to party strength of the Fifth Parliament, is as follows:

#### Size of Delegated Parties Represented (as approved by the Joint Rules Committee on 26 August 2014)

SIZE	PARTIES REPRESENTED
1 Member	1 ANC
2 Members	1 ANC, 1 DA

3 Members	2 ANC (one woman), 1 DA
4 Members	3 ANC, 1 DA
5 Members	3 ANC, 1 DA, 1 x other parties (by agreement)
6 Members	4 ANC, 1 DA, 1 x other parties (by agreement)
7 Members	4 ANC, 2 DA, 1 x other parties (by agreement)
8 Members	5 ANC, 2 DA, 1 x other parties (by agreement)
9 Members	5 ANC, 2 DA, 1 EFF and 1 x other parties (by agreement)
10 Members	6 ANC, 2 DA, 1 EFF and 1 x other parties (by agreement)

### 5.1.5.1 Role of the Delegation Leader

The role of the Delegation Leader is as follows:

- Meet with the delegation and the relevant Focus Group convener to ensure that all preparations are in order.
- Call regular delegation meetings on-site.
- Serves as the contact person for Parliament on-site in the case of possible bilateral engagements.
- Gives final approval to the delegation report, prior to its submission to the relevant Focus Group.
- Present the delegation report to the relevant Focus Group, the PGIR and the Houses of Parliament.

### 5.1.6 Proposed Steps: Tabling of Reports and Implementation of Resolutions

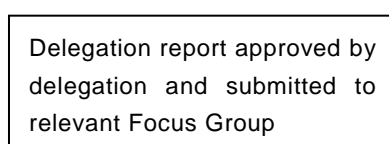
The following procedural mechanism is proposed for the tabling of delegation reports and implementation of resolutions:

#### Step 1:

The sub-structure of the PGIR, that is, the relevant Focus Group, discusses and agrees on a report from a delegation that engaged in an international forum. The report, which should also include resolutions, as well as recommendations from the delegation, is then submitted to the PGIR for consideration. Once the report has been approved by the PGIR, the report is submitted to the Joint Rules Committee (of which the PGIR is a sub-structure) for approval. Once approved by the Joint Rules Committee, the delegation report must be published in the ATC.

#### Step 2:

The Joint Rules Committee refers all the delegation report's recommendations for **debate** in the House(s) to the Presiding Officers and the Joint Programme Committee. The Joint Rules Committee also refers all other recommendations for **any other action** required by Parliament to the PGIR for communication to the appropriate structure (s) (i.e relevant parliamentary committee(s) or the Secretary to Parliament). Figure 1 below aims to illustrate the proposed mechanism:



**Figure 1: Proposed procedural mechanism: Tabling of Reports and Implementation of Resolutions**

## **5.2 Guideline for Parliamentary Travel Policy**

The Guideline for Parliamentary Travel Policy was adopted in 2006 by the Parliamentary Oversight Authority (POA). It covers two forms of parliamentary travel, namely travel initiated by committees and travel in response to formal invitation or in fulfilment of Parliament's international obligations. The following section will focus only *on travelling in response to formal invitations or in fulfilment of Parliament's international obligations*.

### **5.2.1 Travel**

Travel in response to formal invitations or in fulfilment of Parliament's international obligations can be defined as travel by an individual Member, a committee or a delegation that has been approved by the Speaker of the National Assembly and/or the Chairperson of the NCOP.

### **5.2.2 Funding**

In cases where international organisations to which Parliament is not formally affiliated invite a Member, a committee or a delegation to attend a specific event, it is expected that all costs will

be borne by the organisation extending the invitation. If Parliament is formally approached, through the Presiding Officers, to send a delegation or an individual Member to an international event, the resources of the Institution will be used. Members of Parliament participating in international events may not put Parliament under any financial obligation without a mandate from the respective House. Applications for the use of external funding have to be approved by the Presiding Officers.

### **5.2.3 Composition of Delegations**

For the composition of delegations for travel in response to formal invitations or in fulfilment of Parliament's international obligations, refer to the above-mentioned formulae. These formulae do not apply to the activities of organisations to which Parliament is affiliated and of which the Members are appointed by the Houses.

### **5.2.4 Reporting Requirements**

Delegations or individual MPs participating in international events on behalf of Parliament, i.e. in cases where Parliament was formally approached through the Presiding Officers and the funds of the Institution are being utilised, have to submit a report on their participation to the relevant Presiding Officer. The tabling and/or referral of reports will be guided by the recommendations, if any, contained in such reports.

## **5.3 International Relations and Protocol Division**

Before 2010, the International Relations and Protocol sections were separate offices within the Office of the Secretary to Parliament. As a way of strengthening Parliament's international relations capacity, these two sections were amalgamated to become one International Relations and Protocol Division (IRPD) in 2010. The formation of the IRPD is based on one of the core objectives of Parliament's Strategic Plan (2009-2014), that is, "the need to improve and widen the role of Parliament in international relations, cooperation and participation by developing and implementing an international relations strategy". This is in line with Parliament's vision of building an effective people's Parliament that is responsive to the needs of all the people of South Africa. It is against the backdrop of this paradigm shift that the IRPD was assigned the mandate of being the key content development hub for parliamentary international relations, as well as the chief advisory entity on the formulation and implementation of the parliamentary international relations strategy.

The functions of the IRPD are informed by various strategic policy documents of Parliament, including:

- *Parliament's Strategic Plan (2009-2014)*;
- *Strategic Plan for the 5<sup>th</sup> Democratic Parliament 2014 – 2019*;
- proposed *International Relations Strategy (2011)*;
- the *Policy Perspectives and Operational Guidelines for Parliament's Involvement and Engagements in International Relations*, as agreed by Parliament's Joint Rules Committee (1996);
- the *Report of the Independent Panel Assessment of Parliament (2009)* that pronounced on the need for the improvement of Parliament's participation and co-operation in international relations,;

- the *Oversight and Accountability Model of Parliament (2011)* that emphasised the need for Parliament to amend its rules in order to facilitate the process for the consideration and implementation of the outcomes of parliamentary participation in international relations; and
- the regular policy decisions that emanate from the PGIR.

The IRPD has the following objectives:

- To provide qualitative content advice;
- To conduct continuous international relations policy analysis;
- To produce action-oriented policy recommendations;
- To develop discussion documents and concept papers;
- To coordinate the work of the PGIR;
- To manage the IRPD's finance and logistical operations;
- To coordinate Parliament's bilateral and multilateral relations;
- To render protocol and ceremonial services to Parliament; and
- To support the international relations implementation process.

The above objectives will be executed through the development and delivery of qualitative content to support the Presiding Officers and MPs on various matters of international relations (bilateral and multilateral) and national foreign policy issues. The IRPD also provides strategic advice in the formulation and implementation of international relations policy and coordinating all activities pertaining to Parliament's engagement in international relations. The IRPD will also render professional protocol and ceremonial services to Parliament.

The proposed structure of the IRPD, which aims to enhance content development, will consist of the following five sections:

- International Relations Policy Analysis Section
- Bilateral Relations Section
- Multilateral Relations Section
- Protocol and Ceremonial Section
- International Relations Operations Management Section

Table 2 below summarises the key functions of the 5 sections in the IRPD:

**Table 1: Breakdown of the IRPD structure**

Policy Analysis Section	Bilateral Relations Section	Multilateral Relations Section	Protocol and Ceremonial Section	Operations Management Section
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To provide periodic policy papers for PGIR and its focus groups</li> <li>• To collect and analyse international agreements</li> <li>• To provide onsite content support to various delegations on international engagements</li> <li>• To analyse and evaluate existing co-operations, friendships and participation of Parliament in the international arena</li> <li>• To facilitate workshops, seminars and roundtable discussions</li> <li>• To create and maintain relations with national and international policy research institutions.</li> <li>• To facilitate exchange programmes with like-minded policy and analysis institutions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To support inter-parliamentary cooperation</li> <li>• To support the formation of strategic partnerships, friendships, associations and network groups</li> <li>• To build and sustain conducive relations with strategic partners / allies in Africa and Asia</li> <li>• To draft and scrutinise Memoranda of Understanding and agreements</li> <li>• To ensure co-ordination, communication and liaison with relevant stakeholders in support of bilateral relations</li> <li>• To ensure implementation of bilateral co-operation agreements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To ensure effective participation of the South African Parliament at all multilateral structures</li> <li>• To strengthen and support the transformation of the PAP and SADC-PF</li> <li>• To promote South Africa's international relations policy at all multilateral structures</li> <li>• To support MPs in order to promote South-South solidarity and positively influence current debates regarding the reform of the global system of governance and the world's financial architecture</li> <li>• To organise briefing meetings on content issues before delegations depart for multilateral meetings, as well as when they return</li> <li>• To compile post-multilateral delegation reports and distribute resolutions and recommendations to relevant portfolio committees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing protocol and ceremonial support to Presiding Officers and MPs pertaining to:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ceremonies of State and Parliament (i.e. State of the Nation Address)</li> <li>○ Sectoral Parliaments (i.e. NA People's Assembly and NCOP Taking Parliament to the People)</li> <li>○ Incoming and Outgoing Working Visits</li> <li>○ Protocol Liaison</li> <li>○ Implementing legislation pertaining to Protocol</li> <li>○ Organising diplomatic and official passports and visas for MPs and officials</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To ensure the effective administration and management of all the operations of the IRPD pertaining to:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Travel administration and logistics</li> <li>○ Gifts acquisition and registry</li> <li>○ Finance and procurement administration</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

In addition to these Sections, the PGIR Coordination Office will be established to assist the PGIR in terms of the following:

- To support PGIR Focus Groups
- To support PGIR representation at Joint Rules Committee sittings
- To coordinate the formation of friendship groups, strategic partnerships and networks
- To provide logistics for PGIR meetings and events
- To record PGIR proceedings and decisions
- To organise annual PGIR strategic workshops
- To liaise with parliamentary committees

In fulfilling these roles, the IRPD works closely with other stakeholders, including the Research Unit, Legal Services and NA and NCOP Table Divisions.

## **CHAPTER 6: PARLIAMENTARY INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND THE FUTURE**

South Africa remains an active participant in the developing world's efforts to comprehensively reform the architecture of global governance. Membership to international organisations, as discussed above, not only provides parliaments with the opportunity to engage with their regional and international counter-parts on mutual issues of concern, but also gives the citizenry they represent a voice on the international stage. In addition, these engagements provide the platforms for parliaments to participate in the international reform efforts currently driven by the developing world. In order to help reform the architecture of global governance, the South African Parliament needs to implement the outstanding issues currently before the respective multilateral organisations it is affiliated to.

### **6.1 Outstanding Political Issues**

In terms of advancing the African Agenda, a strengthened SADC and AU will require legislative bodies empowered to pass regional and continental laws, as well as to oversee their implementation, thus contributing to improved governance and accountability at regional and continental levels. In this light, Parliament needs to prioritise the following:

- **Transformation of the SADC-PF** – The South African Parliament in June 2015 agreed to a motion in support of the transformation of the SADC-PF into a regional parliament. In addition, the 37<sup>th</sup> Plenary Assembly of the SADC-PF (hosted by the South African Parliament in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal from 6 to 10 July 2015) acknowledged that all the Heads of State and Government of all the SADC countries had individually expressed their support in favour of the transformation. This included President Zuma, who expressed his support during his remarks at the opening dinner of the Plenary Assembly. The Plenary Assembly further resolved that the next step would be for the SADC Summit of Heads of State and Government, at their meeting in August 2015, to consider the matter as a collective and determine the way forward. However, at this Summit meeting, the transformation was not approved, in line with previous Summit decisions on the matter, and new avenues are being explored to pursue this issue.
- **Transformation of the PAP** – One of the most significant strategic focuses of the PAP is its transformation from its current state as a consultative and advisory body into a fully fledged legislative organ of the AU. As mentioned before, Article 2(3) of the PAP Protocol

provides that the ultimate aim of the PAP shall be to evolve into an institution with full legislative powers, whose members are elected by universal adult suffrage. However, until such time as the member States decide otherwise by an amendment to the Protocol, the PAP will continue to serve as an advisory and consultative body.

Given the ongoing developments regarding the transformation of the SADC-PF and the PAP, Parliament, as the representatives of the people, should consider mechanisms that would popularise these organisations, particularly because, once transformed, elections to these organisations would be done by universal adult suffrage. Such mechanisms could include distributing regular press statements upon the return of SADC-PF and PAP delegations, and holding regular debates regarding issues of regional/continental concern that are on these organisations' agendas.

In terms of the transformation of the global system of governance, as well as strengthening North-South dialogue, the transformation and status' of the IPU and CPA warrant the following action by Parliament:

- **Transformation of the IPU** – In terms of the transformation of the IPU, Parliament should familiarise itself with the Draft Convention of the IPU which aims to confer the formal status of an international organisation on the IPU. In so doing, the IPU will be emulating the practice of other major organisations that were established on the basis of international conventions. In short, concluding an international convention on the IPU will demonstrate States' commitment to working together through their parliaments to promote democracy at the national and international level. It will give political and diplomatic support to the IPU and will strengthen its ability to promote democracy. It will place the IPU on an equal footing with other international organisations. However, there are a number of challenges associated with such a move. These include Parliaments' limited role in concluding international agreements; uncertainty in many countries around the willingness of the Executive to sign an international agreement establishing the IPU as an international organisation; uncertainty about the cost implications; a lack of buy-in from all IPU members; and possible reluctance on the part of the most powerful countries in the IPU, i.e. European and Asian countries, who are adequately represented in the UN Security Council to support the conclusion of an international agreement.
- **Transformation of the CPA** – The debate before the CPA currently revolves around its transformation from a charity to a diplomatic institution. It is thus recommended that the leadership of the PGIR facilitate a meeting between representatives of the CPA-South Africa Branch and the CPA focus group to discuss the country's position on the transformation of the CPA. The aim would be to ensure a uniform response at future meetings where the topic may be discussed. It could also include a briefing on the legal implications of the transformation of the CPA and the challenges associated with such transformation.
- **The Future of the ACP Group post-Cotonou** – South Africa will have to reflect on the role it sees for the ACP Group post-2020, and whether it will still form part of the ACP configuration when the Cotonou Agreement expires in 2020. The Heads of State and Government of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP Group) met at the 7<sup>th</sup> Summit of the ACP Group in Sipopo, Equatorial Guinea, on 13 and 14 December 2012. The theme of the meeting was "*The Future of the ACP Group in a Changing World: Challenges and Opportunities*". At the Summit, the Sipopo Declaration was adopted and



the ACP Heads of States agreed to remain united as a Group after 2020 when the Cotonou Agreement expires. A definitive position on the future of the ACP group will be adopted at the 8<sup>th</sup> ACP Summit that is expected to be held in The Independent State of Papua New Guinea in May 2016. .

The IPU, CPA and ACP have the potential of addressing the existing global imbalances which favour countries of the North. The IPU, for instance, once transformed, would have the same status as the UN, which currently excludes parliamentary representation.

## 6.2 Administrative Considerations

The future of South Africa's effective parliamentary diplomacy will require Parliament to be more proactive in advancing South Africa's national foreign policy objectives at the bilateral and multilateral parliamentary forums of engagement. This will require structured processes and procedures to ensure that Parliament's international engagements are also processed in a streamlined way, as is done with all domestic engagements. This would also ensure assist Parliament in ensuring that resolutions meaning from international meetings are implemented in an organised manner. Therefore, in addition to the outstanding and ongoing *political* issues that the Fifth Parliament needs to attend to, as highlighted above, Parliament should also consider the following administrative recommendations:

- **Adopting a procedural mechanism for the processing of delegation reports** – Parliament has yet to adopt an official procedural mechanisms for the tabling and adoption of delegation reports. Consequently, the majority of delegation reports have not been tabled in the Houses for adoption, and hence have not been adopted as official delegation reports.
- **Ensuring that the PGIR and Focus Groups function effectively to provide strategic advice to delegations and dedicated support staff** – The PGIR organised two workshops in 2015 which, amongst others, facilitated the appointment of Convenors of the respective Focus Groups. As Focus Groups were established to ensure action is taken to implement the recommendations and resolutions of the multilateral bodies Parliament is affiliated to, each group would have to establish a parliamentary index of core areas of intervention in order to clearly demonstrate what is lacking and what can be strengthened for each multilateral body. In addition, Focus Groups should also advise delegations on which issues of strategic importance they should advance when attending meetings. All of these responsibilities would require regular meetings to engage timeously on strategic issues to be pursued.

---

## Sources

Commonwealth Secretariat (2011) *Gender and Political Development: Women and Political Leadership in the Commonwealth*.

International Relations and Cooperation Division (2012) *International Relations Strategy*. Parliament of the Republic of South Africa. June.

International Relations and Cooperation Division (2014) *The Structure and Activities of the PGIR*. Parliament of the Republic of South Africa. June.

International Relations and Cooperation Division (2014) *Legacy Report of Parliamentary International Relations 2009 – 2014*.

Parliament of the Republic of South Africa (2006) *Policy Perspectives and Operational Guidelines for Parliament's Involvement and Engagement in International Relations*. November.

Parliament of the Republic of South Africa (2008) Rules of the NCOP. 9<sup>th</sup> Edition.

Parliament of the Republic of South Africa (2011) Joint Rules of Parliament. 6<sup>th</sup> Edition.

Parliament of the Republic of South Africa (2014) Rules of the NA. 8<sup>th</sup> Edition.

Parliament of the Republic of South Africa (n.d.) *Guidelines for Parliamentary Travel Policy*.

Somgqeza, K. (2013) *Parliament Dimension on International Relations: An International Relations Strategy*. Presentation. 10 June.

Somgqeza, K. (2014) *Presentation of the Priorities of Parliament in International Relations and the Membership of Parliament in Parliamentary Bodies: On the Occasion of the On-Boarding Training*. Presentation. 7 June.