



**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)

**REPORT OF THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE  
'RUSSIA AND AFRICA'**

**Moscow, Russia**

**19 – 20 March 2023**



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A delegation from the South African Parliament participated in the Second International Parliamentary Conference - Russia-Africa under the theme 'Russia – Africa in multipolar world order' from 19 to 20 March 2023 and this engagement supported Parliament's constitutional mandates as follows:

- **Deepened international engagement:** Parliament's international engagements were deepened through the following:
  - Hon. NCOP Chairperson and Hon. NA Speaker's respective input to the roundtable discussions on the Neocolonialism of the West: How to Prevent the repetition of History and the Indivisible Security: The capabilities and contributions of Parliaments. Also, their respective input to the theme 'Russia – Africa in a multipolar world order'.
  - Hon. NA Speaker's bilateral engagement with the Chairman of the State Duma Vyacheslav Volodin.

## NOTEWORTHY ISSUES

- **The PGIR, Presiding Officers, and the Secretary to Parliament note the proposal for the Conference of Russia and Africa to be an annual event:** Presiding Officers and Secretary to Parliament should note that the Chairman of the State Duma Vyacheslav Volodin proposed to hold the Conference annually. Chairman Volodin added that an annual Conference could be a good base for building relations on the principles of friendship and mutual respect, non-interference in the internal affairs of sovereign states.
- **The PGIR and Presiding Officers note the suggestions to sign (MOU) parliamentary agreement and the creation of a high-level Commission between the State Duma and the National Assembly:** During the bilateral engagement, the NA Speaker, Hon. Mapisa-Nqakula and the Chairman of the State Duma Vyacheslav Volodin agreed to a suggestion of a signing of a relevant agreement between the State Duma and the National Assembly as well as the creation of a high-level commission between the two parliaments.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the meeting: To deliberate on the theme 'Russia – Africa in a multipolar world order' and plenary discussions. More than 40 official parliamentary delegations from African countries took part in the Conference.

Delegation Members:

- National Assembly Speaker Nosiviwe, Ms. Mapisa-Nqakula, MP, and National Council of Provinces (NCOP) Chairperson, Mr. Amos Masondo, MP - Leaders of the Delegation.
- Mr. Cedric Frolic, MP.
- Ms. Dories Dlakude, MP.
- Mr. Kenneth Mmoiemang, MP.
- Mr. Mamagase Nchabeleng, MP.
- Ms. Shahidabibi Shaikh, MP.
- Mr. Nqabayomzi Kwankwa, MP.

Delegation Secretariat:

- Mr. Xolile George, Secretary to Parliament.
- Ms. Nogolide Nojozi, Adviser to NA Speaker.
- Ms. Zukiswa Kula, Personal Secretary to NA Speaker.
- Mr. Isaac Kekana, Protocol Officer to NCOP Chairperson.
- Ms. Nomawabo Baduza, Personal Secretary to NCOP Chairperson.
- Mr. Job. Sithole, IRPD Division Manager.
- Ms. Mpho Monnakgotla, IRPD Researcher.
- Mr. Ian Mundell, IRPD Protocol Officer.
- Ms. Belinda Trout (Executive Assistant to NA House Chairperson on Committees).

## 2. MEETING OUTCOMES

### 2.1 PLENARY SESSIONS

The plenary sessions took place on the 19<sup>th</sup> of March 2023 and focused on:

- **Issue 1: Parliamentary Support of Scientific and Educational Cooperation and Education**

On this issue, participants amongst others noted that sovereignty is very important both for Russia and African countries and not only political but also economic sovereignty. Economic

sovereignty cannot be achieved without progress in science and education technologies. In this light, Russia should focus on these areas in cooperation with Africa. According to Konstantin Mogilevsky, Deputy Minister of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation, almost 35,000 students from Africa are currently studying in Russian universities, and more than a third of them are from Egypt. Also, in several secondary schools in Russia, Swahili and Amharic are being taught as additional languages.

Director of the Institute of African and Russian Studies of the Moscow State University Alexey Maslov supports the point of view that science and education are the main areas of cooperation between Russia and the countries of the African continent. As education gives a completely different, free form of thinking. Therefore, it is important for both Russia and African countries to overcome the post-colonial syndrome - where they are guided by other people's standards and approaches.

- **Issue 2: Legislative Response to Economic Challenges**

On this issue, participants amongst others noted that the modern economic challenges are crises caused by Western countries guided by the United States of America's numerous economic sanctions aimed at destroying the Russian economy and in violation of all international trade rules and foreign economic relations, according to the First Deputy Chairman of the State Duma Alexander Zhukov. Jacob Mudenda, the Speaker of the National Assembly of the Republic of Zimbabwe noted that the African continent needed infrastructure development in areas such as road improvements, and rail as well as air transport. Without infrastructure, it will be impossible to trade with developed countries such as Russia. He also noted the necessity to develop the energy sector for industry and sufficient water for agriculture.

The Chairman of the State Duma Committee on Energy Pavel Zavalny said that the signing of inter-governmental agreements was an important tool of political support for enhancing energy cooperation between Russia and African countries. He also emphasised that energy was one of the most promising areas of economic cooperation between Russia and African states. Economic growth and energy demand are shifting to Asia and Africa in the conditions of global economic and geopolitical transformation. Therefore, the development and harmonisation of energy legislation can play an important role in enhancing mutually beneficial energy cooperation between Russia and African countries

- **Issue 3: Indivisible Security: The Capabilities and Contributions of Parliaments**

On this issue, participants amongst others noted that no nation can achieve security on its own, alone. There is no security in an unsafe environment, therefore security requires a global approach. The growth of international terrorism, drug trafficking, and the proliferation of nuclear and biological weapons are becoming serious threats. In this light, parliamentarians were encouraged to join efforts to protect nations and jointly speak at international platforms, like the UN and other organisations, and demand the implementation of the provisions of the UN Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons (BTWC) and their destruction.

On this issue, the NA Speaker, Hon. Mapisa-Nqakula noted the importance of countries maintaining the values of humanity and tolerance towards each other. She recalled that during the COVID pandemic, many countries preferred to care only about their safety, and as a result, African states did not receive enough vaccines and lives were lost. Also, noted that issues of climate change, poverty, and human rights violations have become a threat to peace and security. Also emphasised the importance of compliance with international treaties. Jacob Mudenda, the Speaker of the National

Assembly of the Republic of Zimbabwe, agreed with her by noting that the UN Charter and international law are being manipulated by certain countries.

○ **Issue 4: Neocolonialism of the West: How to Prevent the Repetition of History**

On this issue, participants amongst others noted that complete decolonisation has not yet taken place: the decolonisation of the economy, international affairs, and culture is yet to be realised. According to the parliamentarian, consciousness is the most important thing that should be decolonized: 'We still live in captivity of the Western paradigm of consciousness, the Western matrix of thinking, and there are a lot of examples of this'.

The NCOP Chairperson, Hon. Masondo, amongst others, noted that neo-colonialism includes foreign capital used to exploit nations, therefore the promotion of economic independence and diversification of African economies is vital in this regard. Also, spoke about the high-level cooperation between the Republic of South Africa and the Russian Federation. He also briefly touched on the liberation of South Africa from colonial dependence.

## **2.2 PLENARY SESSION**

The Plenary Session on the theme 'Russia – Africa in a multipolar world order' took place on the 20<sup>th</sup> of March 2023 as follows:

### **Address by the President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin**

President Putin, amongst others, noted that the conference is undoubtedly important in the context of the continued development of Russia's multifaceted cooperation with the countries of the African continent. It brings together legislators who are supposed to express the will of their voters in their countries and work in the interests of their people, their presence shows that the peoples of Africa are interested in stepping up efforts to develop multifaceted and mutually beneficial relations with Russia.

On trade, noted that the process of establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area, which began in 2021, opens up additional opportunities. In the future, this zone will become a continental market with a total GDP of more than three trillion dollars. Russia is in favour of actively developing ties with this new association both within the Eurasian Economic Union and bilaterally.

On food, fertilizers, fuel, and other product supplies, noted that Russia, guided by the needs of African countries, has recently agreed to extend the agreement concluded in Istanbul on the export of Ukrainian food through the Black Sea and the unblocking of Russian agricultural exports and fertiliser supplies for another 60 days. Russia intends to increase cooperation with African countries on medicines and healthcare to ensure biological and epidemiological safety. Concluded by recalling the words of Nelson Mandela 'nothing should divert us from the road to freedom, and we should not allow anyone to stand in our way'.

The **NCOP Chairperson, Hon. Masondo** noted that Russia has no colonial heritage in Africa and no African country sees Russia as an enemy. On the contrary, Russia helped South Africa in its liberation, therefore Russia is a reliable partner. Also, stressed that South Africa stood for a multipolar world. As political diversity is a guarantee of strength and realization of potential and a solution to the challenges faced by humanity.

The **NA Speaker, Hon. Mapisa-Nqakula** emphasised that many countries were facing very aggressive sanctions and other methods of control. Such decisions are not made in the interests of ordinary, average citizens. The imposition of such sanctions is one of the flagrant violations of human rights. Also, after many decades of colonialism Africa continues to be a continent suffering from exploitation and draining of resources and wealth. That is why Africa needs an honest, fair, and balanced counterpart.

### 3. OTHER EVENTS / BILATERAL MEETINGS

#### ○ **The Chairman of the State Duma and the NA Speaker**

The Chairman of the State Duma stressed that relations between Russia and the Republic of South Africa were developing with the help of cooperation between the Presidents of the two states. Both countries have great capabilities and should use the parliamentary dimension to do everything to enhance cooperation in various areas. He suggested preparing and signing a relevant agreement between the State Duma and the National Assembly of the Parliament of South Africa, as well as creating a high-level commission. The NA Speaker, Hon. Mapisa-Nqakula supported his suggestion. The Chairman also noted that trade and economic cooperation between the two countries show good results. In 2022 the trade turnover between the Russian Federation and the Republic of South Africa increased by 16.7%.

The NA Speaker, Hon. Mapisa-Nqakula thanked the Chairman for sending the invitation to take part in the Parliamentary Conference. Also, noted that is very important for South Africa that Russia gives priority to the African continent. As many countries consider Africa as a great possibility to get African resources. But taking into account the history of cooperation between the two countries, South Africa believes that Russia has genuine interests in Africa. NA Speaker also noted that cooperation between the two countries did not start yesterday but started decades ago. Also, assured that South Africa will continue to cooperate with Russia.

### 4. RECOMMENDED ISSUES FOR NOTING AND/OR ACTION BY PARLIAMENT

The South African Parliament is invited to note the following key issues

- **The PGIR, Presiding Officers, and the Secretary to Parliament note the proposal for the Conference of Russia and Africa to be an annual event:** the Chairman of the State Duma Vyacheslav Volodin proposed to hold the Conference annually. Chairman Volodin added that an annual Conference could be a good base for building relations on the principles of friendship and mutual respect, non-interference in the internal affairs of sovereign states.
- **The PGIR and Presiding Officers note the suggestions to sign (MOU) parliamentary agreement and the creation of a high-level Commission between the State Duma and the National Assembly:** During the bilateral engagement, the NA Speaker, Hon. Mapisa-Nqakula and the Chairman of the State Duma Vyacheslav Volodin agreed to a suggestion of a signing of a relevant agreement between the State Duma and the National Assembly, as well as the creation of a high-level commission between the two parliaments.

END