



**DRAFT DELEGATION REPORT OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN  
DELEGATION TO SOUTH AFRICA EUROPEAN UNION INTER-  
PARLIAMENTARY MEETINGS IN STRASBOURG ON 18 -19 OCTOBER  
2023**

## 1. Background

Parliament's Strategic Plan places prime importance on increasing its capacity to represent the interests of South Africa in the international arena. It further seeks to promote and facilitate the transformation of undemocratic governance structures and participate in rules based system that seeks to democratize multilateral institutions, processes, building strategic partnerships around mutual interests and promote internationalism and solidarity through the interconnectedness of challenges amongst African countries in particular and developing nations in particular.

In line with the South African Parliament's mandate of international participation, Parliament has several strategic partnerships including one with the European Union Parliament. The South African Parliament's relationship with the European Parliament was cemented by the Joint Declaration of February 2008 signed by the two Parliaments as a commitment to regular engagement on issues of mutual interest and to share views on global issues.

On the 18-19 October 2023, a multi-party delegation of the South African Parliament met with the European Union Parliament delegation to discuss issues of mutual interest in Strasbourg, France at the chambers of the European Parliament from the 18- 19 October 2023. This constituted the 27<sup>th</sup> South Africa- European Union Inter-Parliamentary Meeting (IPM) between Member of the South African Parliament and Members of the European Parliament. The issues of mutual interest within the Agenda included the following topics

- Peace, Conflict and Security: Russia and Ukraine Conflict
- Trade (Economic Partnership Agreements, PA, Non-Tariff Measures/ barriers, Raw Materials/Mineral) Presentation Discussion.
- Climate Change (European Union Impact on Trade (CBAM.), energy supply)
- South Africa Perspective on Women and Empowerment, Entrepreneurship and Quality Education
- Upcoming Elections in the Republic of South Africa

Key amongst the Members who constituted the South African delegation included the following;

- **Hon S Lucas, Deputy Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces (Head of Delegation)**
- **Ambassador Xhasa: South Africa Ambassador to the European Union**
- **Hon Nyambi, House Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces**
- **Hon M Dangor; Chairperson of the SA-EU Focus Group**
- **Hon H Mkhali: Member of Parliament**
- **Hon E L Powell: Member of Parliament**
- **Hon M Rayi; Chairperson the Select Committee on Trade**
- **Hon L Moshodi: Member of Parliament**
- **Adv ME Phindela: Secretary to the National Council of Provinces**
- **Dr S Mvulane: Senior Official in the Office the Deputy Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces**
- **Mr N Mabaso : Official in the Office of the House Chairperson the National Council of Provinces**
- **Mr M Ngese: Researcher International Relations and Protocol Division**
- **Ms Janine Paulsen: Official at International Relations and Protocol Division**
- **Ms R Scott: Official at Legislative Sector**
- **Mr S Mangali: Official at the South African Embassy to the European Union**

## **2. Briefing and Overview from the South African Ambassador, Her Excellency,**

### **Ambassador Xasa**

Her Excellency Ambassador Xhasa, who is representing South Africa to the European Union met with the South African delegation on the 17<sup>th</sup> October to brief the delegation on key issues emanating from their relationship with the European Union as it relate to the Executive Arm of the State which in some way provide the context m the nature of the activities between the European Parliament and Parliament of the Republic of South Africa`s relationship.

In her reflection, Ambassador highlighted the fact that this relationship operates in an environment driven by a culture where countries orient themselves to pursue and protect their national interests even though its intended objective is to pursue regional integration at policy level which is aimed at ensuring cooperating amongst countries at economic, social and political level. Equally, even though the European subscribe to multilateralism, it continues in its composition to be dominated by aspects of extremism and right wing political parties whose statements at foreign policy level sometimes bring about more areas of divergence instead of advancing cooperation and integration at policy level.

She articulated her observation with respect to lack of consensus on a number of issues which include migration, trade and regularities emanating from climate change taxation laws. To this end, The rejuvenation of the partnership at parliamentary level through the visit by the South African delegation bring some hope and expectation in terms of ensure that the dialogue unlock a number of disputes which the executive arm of the State has been experiencing some challenges. Key amongst the issues which cause some stagnation is the delay of the Summit of the Heads of State between the EU and the South African government. This was preceded the Ministerial Summit which also resulted to the non-adoption of the Joint Statement due to a number of disagreements on a variety of issues that includes South Africa non alignment position on Russia- Ukraine war, Palestine and Israel conflict, climate change new regulations and trade related challenges that prohibit South Africa from accessing the European Market. The Ambassador further advised the delegation to approach the meeting in a way that seeks to prioritize the following issues;

- Emphasize that the delegation must emphasize the importance of this relationship and the commitment to ensure that there is commitment and fairness to ensure that the intended objectives are realized.
- Clarify the approach of arriving at consensus on various issues through a rules based system of multilateralism.
- Reflect critically on the Joint statement
- Articulate South Africa`s non align position on conflict
- Prioritize issues on trade

- Interrogate the issue of attaching conditionalities with respect to the approach on how the just transition should unfold.
- Raise issues of oversight as it relate to illicit financial flows and honesty on issues of international business and investments
- Interrogate the cause of delay of the reviewing of the economic partnership agreements in the SADC region.

### **3. Messages of Solidarity on the Meeting with the European Union**

The Core-Chairperson of the European Parliament delegation in her remarks acknowledged the major global shift and political changes which amongst other include the recent the COVID 19 pandemic which adversely affected the possibility of the two delegations to meet due to lockdown restrictions that were introduced in order to curb the spread of the virus across the borders. This has also exacerbated the economic challenges of many countries and ultimately the possibility to achieve the sustainable development goals.

She appreciated the initiative by the South African delegation to honor the meeting which is central to the building of the confidence of this relationship and its intended objectives of the partnership that includes the following;

- Championing the programmes on uplifting parliamentary diplomacy
- Promote peace and understanding and pursue common objectives of economic integration and address the challenges of underdevelopment, poverty, inequality and unemployment.

The Deputy Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces, Hon Sylvia Lucas in her opening remarks reflected that these Inter-parliamentary Meetings play a very central role to the current evolving work of our parliamentary diplomacy as it intends to discuss critical issues of mutual interest within our countries and regions in particular. They further provide our parliaments with opportunity to complement the work of our

national governments but most importantly to complement South Africa's foreign policy priority of promoting the North to South cooperation or dialogue.

This meeting continues on the firm foundation laid during the last meeting we held six months ago in South Africa wherein all our counterparts discussed and committed on a number of issues that informed the form and content of our Joint Statement. Key amongst the issues included the following;

- **South Africa-European Union Parliaments' Strategic Relations** and our commitment to attend the European Union meetings aimed at sustaining our strategic partnership whilst noting the 2019 elections and the unfortunate COVID 19 pandemic which adversely affected our modus operandi with respect to the routine of our regular meetings.
- **Lack of diversification of South Africa's trade with the European Union** with respect to concerns on the trade deficit and the nature of South Africa's trade with the European Union towards more minerals and natural resources rather than manufactured exports from South Africa and the European Union. Of critical importance was to ensure a concerted effort to diversify trade between South Africa and the European Union.
- **Trade's contribution to industrialisation and employment** by ensuring that SA-EU relationship realised its intended objective to bring about developmental trade paradigm, thereby enhancing industrialisation and job creation.
- **Review of the Economic Partnership Agreement:** and the need to address limitations that resulted to the delays in the renewal of the agreement. We further reiterated that South African Delegation emphasised that it supports the principles of the EPA agreement to facilitate trade, protect infant industries and support development.
- **Sustainable Development:** We noted the EU interest in South Africa's natural resources particularly in the area of steel and coal. However, we further assert that our natural resources should be primarily used to advance its industrialisation drive through local beneficiation

#### **4. Key Messages of Solidarity from the European Union and South African Ambassador**

The Ambassador of the European Union to South Africa appreciated the values that inform the struggle for South African freedom which finds expression in her constitution that promotes the rule of law. She further acknowledged South Africa's role in the maintenance of multilateralism and promotion of global peace as a former member of the United Nations Security Council.

It was further indicated that this partnership is crucial in ensuring that the two delegations trace a new path of parliamentary democracy in the midst of contemporary global conflicts. This will ensure progress on the achievement of sustainable development goals and maintain multilateral reforms.

Ambassador Xhasa acknowledged the tectonic shifts in the multilateral world and the response by different actors to such shifts. She called for our multilateral institutions to find workable solutions to respond to our global complexities within the context of greater geopolitical contestations that include the following;

- Russia-Ukraine Conflict
- Palestine and Israel Conflict
- Energy Transition and Climate Change challenges
- Reduce dependencies
- Create a safe space for dialogue
- Reform of the United Nations Security Council
- Implementation of the United Nations two State Solution resolution of 1967.
- Be genuine in exchanging the best practices
- Acknowledge the role of Parliament in unlocking challenges at an executive level.

##### **4.1 Key Highlights on Enhancing the Legislative Sector Capacity and Oversight**

The presentation relating to the aspects of the legislative sector with respect to enhancing capacity building and oversight was delivered by the Secretary of the National Council of

Provinces, Adv Phindela. In his background he articulated that the areas of collaboration between the South African legislative sector and European Union which dates back to 1996. It was further stated that the consolidation and enhancement of democracy and remarkable development of the South Africa Legislative Sector over nearly 30 years of democracy came about with significant & sustained support of the EU – through dialogue, technical assistance and development cooperation. This long-term, large-scale collaboration between the European Union (EU) and the SALS can be regarded as unique in scope and nature. The total EU support amounts to €55 million since 1996. The EU has thus supported all six of the democratic Parliaments - and broader Legislative Sector - since the end of apartheid, and has added much value to the strengthening of this branch of the State

The evolution of the South African legislative sector and the European Union was premised on the following areas of priority;

- **Parliamentary Support Programme** (1996-2003) focused on setting up democratic institutions
- **Legislative Support Programme** (2004-2008) focused on Facilitation of the advancement of democracy and good governance – based on SA Legislative Sector Policy and Strategic Framework.
- **Legislative Sector Policy Support Programme** (2009-2014) Budget support modality
  - Objectives: Deepening people-centred democracy; Strengthening law-making & oversight capacity; Building an effective and efficient Legislative Sector; and Strengthening capacity to oversee international relations.
  - Significant developments – development & implementation of Models/ Frameworks – notably the Sector Oversight Model & Public Participation Framework



#### 4.1.1 Focus on the Current Development Cooperation

The presentation further paid attention to the contemporary priority areas of cooperation which included the following;

##### **Enhancing Legislature Oversight Programme (ELOP) (2017-2024)**

- Funding through SA-EU Multi-Annual Indicative Programme under focal area of “Building a capable and developmental State” (National Development Plan)
- **Overall objective** - to strengthen democracy and good governance through effective execution of the core mandate of the Legislative Sector
- The **specific objectives**
  - To strengthen the capacity of the legislative sector to exercise oversight.
  - To devise means and mechanisms to ensure public involvement in legislative processes.
  - To strengthen cooperation and cooperative governance in the legislative sector.
  - To improve knowledge, skills, systems & processes in the Legislative Sector.

Key amongst the areas of achievements articulated included Implementation of capacity development programmes for Members and staff, the Launch of the SA Parliamentary Institute (9 December 2021). In addition, various studies conducted as well as tools and mechanisms developed aimed at enhancing oversight and public participation. The strengthening of International parliamentary relations and engagement. This cooperation resulted into the strengthening cooperative governance amongst the spheres of government. There were also successes in enhancing gender mainstreaming and oversight, strengthening of provincial legislatures as part of democratic architecture and adoption of the Sector Constitution regulating the Sector – aim to pass SA Legislative Sector Bill by term end.

The programmes have increased capacity of members to perform their constitutional duties including related soft skills such as public speaking etc. The Induction programmes

were standardised in all Legislatures, induction modules were developed in 4<sup>th</sup> term and reviewed in each term. Furthermore the SA Parliamentary Institute was established in the 6<sup>th</sup> term to cement the gains made in capacity building programmes of the Sector and to harness efforts aimed at harnessing efforts aimed at professionalization of the Sector and expanding and sustaining capacity building interventions.

## **Discussion and Analysis: Presentation on the Topics**

### **Multilateralism: Peace, Conflict and Security: Russia and Ukraine Conflict**

The South African delegation noted that the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine adversely impacts all African and European countries and refers to national positions as expressed in the UN Security Council and the UN General Assembly. Both delegations expressed their continued commitment to uphold the UN Charter and principles of international law, and reiterated that all governments must act in a manner consistent with the purposes and principles of the UN Charter in its entirety. All states therefore must refrain from the threat or use of force to seek territorial acquisition against the territorial integrity and sovereignty or political independence of any state.

The EP delegation reiterated its strong condemnation of the illegal, unjustified, and unprovoked war of aggression by the Russian Federation against Ukraine, which is causing immense human suffering and demands the complete unconditional withdrawal of all Russian forces from the territory of Ukraine. The EP delegation noted that the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine adversely impacts all African and European countries and refer to national positions as expressed in the UN Security Council and the UN General Assembly.

Both Delegations agreed on the need to prioritize a process of peaceful resolution through dialogue and called for an end to human suffering and people dying. Equally, both Delegations further call for the United Nations Security Council to pursue its objective of maintaining international peace amongst the nations of the world. To this end, there is

an urgent need for substantive negotiations to commence towards achieving sustainable and lasting peace and security in the region.

Both Delegations expressed concern about the continued escalation of violence and its regional and international socio-economic implications. They further highlighted the human suffering and negative consequences of the war with regards to global food and energy security, supply chains, macro-financial stability, inflation and growth.

In calling for peace between Ukraine and Russia, the South African delegation emphasized the need to recognise that there are many other acts of aggression in many parts of the world such as Afghanistan, Palestine, Syria and Western Sahara where the global community has observed continued loss of lives, yet these have not received the global attention that has been given to the Russia-Ukraine conflict. The South African delegation therefore calls for consistency in the consideration, resolution and emphases placed on all global conflicts and reiterated the need for consistency in resolving global conflicts through neutrality, peaceful negotiation and consensus building.

Both Delegations unequivocally condemned all forms of violence and its use to obtain political goals, as well as recognised the need for closer cooperation in the fight against terrorism. They encouraged greater exchange of information and called for measures tackling the threat of radicalism.

The Delegations deplored the loss of innocent lives since 7 October in Israel and Palestine and the thousands of wounded, as well as called for an immediate and unconditional release of all hostages taken since then. Both expressed fear that escalation will inevitably cause more suffering to civilians, both Israelis and Palestinians and risks bringing grave instability to a region already plagued by tensions and war.

Both Delegations stressed the need to further advance on the joint commitment to promote effective multilateralism, as well as to work towards more converging positions in the multilateral fora. Both sides agreed to continue working closely in support of the on-

going UN system reform efforts, including of the UN Security Council, in order to make it more effective, representative, democratic and inclusive.

### **Trade (Economic Partnership Agreements, PA, Non-Tariff Measures/ barriers, Raw Materials/Mineral) Presentation Discussion.**

The two delegations agreed that the overall objective of the EU-SADC EPA is to contribute through trade, to sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction in the Southern African countries. They noted that although trade has increased significantly between both sides, the two delegations agreed that the EU-SADC Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) needs to be modernised in order to adapt to dynamic developments like the African Continental Free Trade Area and to address more effectively pressing issues for the SADC region such as inequality, unemployment and climate change.

The IPM recognized that there are some trade impediments between the EU and SA that have to be solved through continuing constructive dialogue. Both delegations agreed to continue the dialogue and enhance collaboration to ensure minimal impact.

The South African delegation reiterated the importance of the IPM as a strategic conduit for facilitating parliamentary cooperation, consensus building, collaboration and finding lasting solutions to matters of common interest and common concern between SA and the EU. Both delegations therefore call for the facilitation of constructive dialogue towards the eradication of trade impediments, through the effective utilization of Parliament's core functions of law making, oversight and parliamentary diplomacy, to specifically address the following:

- Both delegations call for a constructive dialogue on the review of the EU-SADC EPA as well as trade irritants on both sides of the strategic partnership.
- Possible barriers to mutual and reciprocal market accessibility, which might exacerbate the proliferation of EU regulations that the South African side

considers as either costly or cumbersome, possibly leading to a significant impact on job security, an adverse impact on the SA economy and the advancement of SA development objectives. The South African delegation mentioned issues pertaining to Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) regulations which are becoming trade barriers to SA key industries and the EU side also mentioned certain trade irritants on its side

Both delegations would welcome the establishment of dedicated bilateral meetings on raw material value chains and energy transition. They envisage a great potential for both sides for more collaboration in this field to strengthen cooperation on aspects related to value chains for raw materials for future clean energy, technologies and the energy transition aimed at increasing value addition in Africa.

### **Climate Change**

Members acknowledged the alarming global impact of climate change, and agreed that addressing global warming should be a joint sustainable development priority within the framework of the implementation of the Paris Agreement.

Members discussed the implementation of the EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) aimed at decarbonising trade to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions and agreed that it is crucial that its implementation is carefully executed and takes into account potential negative impacts on African economies and societies. A collaborative and multilateral approach is therefore desirable in ensuring that the CBAM does not result in unintended consequences that reinforce existing power imbalances in the global trading system. Both sides agreed to continue discussions on this issue.

Both delegations underlined that unlocking green growth on a scale that can contribute meaningfully to decarbonisation of the global economy will require a massive scaling up in funding, especially for the African continent.

The two delegations emphasized the outstanding importance of the “Just Energy Transition Partnership”, which is the first of its kind and ought to support South Africa’s move away from fossil energy sources and to accelerate its transition to a low emission, climate resilient economy.

The IPM welcomed the outcome of the first Africa Climate Summit in Nairobi and the European Union’s willingness to be Africa’s partner at the COP28 and in helping to finance and implement urgent climate action.

### **South Africa Perspective on Women and Empowerment, Entrepreneurship and Quality Education**

Both delegations acknowledged the importance of education, for promoting equality and opportunity, creating a robust and innovative economy, resourced by a vibrant private sector and anchored in a solid public commitment to sound governance and common good. Although progress has been made in SA and the EU in advancing gender equality and creating job opportunities for women, much more needs to be done (on both sides) in areas of access to education, finance, entrepreneurship, labour market and all parts of society.

Members stressed that Women’s empowerment and gender equality are a common priority for the work of both Parliaments. They underline that gender equality and gender-sensitive Parliaments are drivers of change for more resilient and fairer societies.

The South African side acknowledged and expressed its appreciation for financial support by the European Union in particular under the EU-Africa Global Gateway Investment Package to the education sector in South Africa.

The South African delegation expressed appreciation of initiatives launched by the EU, such as Erasmus+, to build capacity in the vocational education and training sector as this is an area that South Africa regards as a strategic focus as it is an enabler in re-igniting the economy.

## **Elections**

Both sides informed each other on the up-coming elections and expressed their aspiration to quickly re-engage afterwards in order to hold the 28<sup>th</sup> IPM in South Africa before the end of 2024. The two delegations highlighted the importance of democratic elections as the backbone of our democratic societies and values. Members called for the next SA-EU Summit to take place as soon as possible and to take into considerations all viewpoints and demands mentioned in this statement.

## **Conclusion**

The IPM mandated their Co-Chairs to forward the key issues which were reduced to a joint statement to the President and Members of the European Parliament, the President of the European Commission, President of the European Council, and the European External Action Service (EEAS), and the Parliament of the Republic of South Africa, the President of the Republic of South Africa and the Executive.