



PARLIAMENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND PROTOCOL DIVISION

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Report of the Courtesy call on Mr AN Masondo, MP - the Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) by Dr Marta Matri – the Deputy Speaker of the Parliament of Hungary and delegation held on Thursday, 19 October 2023

1. Purpose of the Report

To report on the Courtesy call on Mr AN Masondo, MP - the Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) by Dr Marta Matri – the Deputy Speaker of the Parliament of Hungary and delegation held on Thursday, 19 October 2023

2. Background

The Embassy of Hungary in Pretoria initiated the meeting. First visit of Dr Márta Mátrai – the Deputy Speaker of the Hungarian Parliament to the RSA. She has been a Member of Parliament since 1998. The Speaker of Hungary, Mr Laszlo Kover paid an official visit to the Parliament of the RSA in 2016 and that visit was never reciprocated by the South African side.

3. Purpose of the courtesy call

The purpose of the courtesy call on Mr AN Masondo, MP was to meet and greet.

Hungarian delegation: Dr Márta Mátrai – the Deputy Speaker of the Hungarian Parliament; H.E Mr Attila György Horvath – Ambassador of Hungary; Ms Beatrix Kese – Deputy Director of the Directorate of Foreign Affairs of the Hungarian National Assembly; Ms Agnes Hryathne, First Secretary , Embassy of Hungary; Mr Aron Lephft , Member of the National Integration Office of the Hungarian Parliament;

South African Parliamentary side: Mr AN Masondo, MP - the Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces (NCOP); Mr Mokate – Executive director: Office of the NCOP Chairperson. Ms Nomfundo Sonjica, the Section Manager: Bilaterals and Multilaterals, IRPD; Mr Zingisa Cawe, the IR Officer: Bilaterals supported the meeting.

4. Meeting discussion

In her opening remarks, Dr Márta Mátrai – the Deputy Speaker of the Hungarian Parliament conveyed greetings from the Speaker of Hungary, Mr Laszlo Kover and extended invitation to Mr AN Masondo, MP - the Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) to pay an official visit to the Parliament of Hungary. She stressed that the invitation is extended on behalf of the Speaker of Hungary, Mr Laszlo Kover.

On Hungary in Africa, Dr Matri indicated that in the last elections, the ruling party got two thirds majority and established a Hungary – Sub-Saharan Parliamentary Friendship Group with Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda and South Africa as countries of focus. The intention would be to establish good relations with the countries in Africa. They intend to have embassies in many countries in Africa. By 2030, Hungary would like to be a country that provides support to many African states.

On higher education, she reiterated a call for cooperation on Higher Education sector and indicated that Hungary has established a scholarship programme - 100 students from South Africa get free tuition fees in three Hungarian institutions of higher learning. She urged South Africa to take such an opportunity. The focus had been on technical, agriculture and economics and keep contact with those students who studied in Hungary.

She also informed the Chairperson of the NCOP about the Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr Peter Szijarto's meeting with Minister Naledi Pandor, MP in the margins of the United Nations General Assembly. Minister Pandor, MP extended an invitation to Mr Szijarto to pay an official visit to the RSA. They agreed for 5-7 December 2023 as a date for the visit. During that visit, a cooperation agreement between South Africa and Hungary would be signed. She hopes that agreement would be effective in boosting economic trade and other areas between the two countries.

He stressed the importance of signing the agreement so that both parties could have something to start working on.

In his response, Mr Masondo, MP - the Chairperson of the NCOP thanked teams from both sides Parliamentary staff and Hungarian embassy in the RSA) for arranging the courtesy call. He called for the strengthening of relations between the two Parliaments, reinforcement of people-to-people relations and cooperation on various areas including sports.

He reiterated the commitment of the RSA government in peace – build better Africa and the better world. He cited the recent trip by President of the Republic, Mr Ramaphosa and other African leaders to Russia and Ukraine – mediation efforts between the warring countries.

On current conflict between Israel and Hamas, pointed out that South Africa will always continue calling for peace, de-escalation of the war and its call for humanitarian support and post-war humanitarian support.

He urged South Africa and Hungary to take the cooperation to a higher level. He stressed the importance of knowledge sharing and technology as critically important. He expressed appreciation to Hungary for its support in that regard and called for intensification of the parliament-to-parliament cooperation.

On BRICS countries, Mr Masondo, MP indicated that the meeting of the Brics Heads of States took place, Parliament of the RSA convened one for Brics Parliamentary Forum to look at matters of oversight and other related matters.

He further expressed his support to the idea of having international conferences and called for countries engaged in war to be invited. That would provide an opportunity for them to engage in negotiations because they can't fight for ever. They would have to be persuaded to negotiate peace because peace is a prerequisite for development. He has taken note all what Dr Marta Matri – the Deputy Speaker of the Parliament of Hungary and delegation have raised.

In her concluding remarks, Dr Marta Matri – the Deputy Speaker of the Parliament of Hungary commended the role played by the RSA in world affairs. She pointed out that the 1990 situation in Eastern Europe led the

people of Hungary to intensify calls for a new government. By 2010, Hungary started a new era and had proper elections that led to the ruling party getting two thirds majority.

On Russia – Ukraine war, she pointed out that Hungary believes in having peace with neighbors that is based in respect territorial integrity and sovereignty of a state in essence Ukraine. Many Ukrainian refugees sought refuge in Hungary and had to be given temporary residence status. Those who are of school age had to be allowed to attend school and have access to health facilities.

On Hungary European Union (EU) membership, Dr Matra indicated that they are EU member however, they voted against sending weapons to Ukraine but were in favour of providing humanitarian aid to war victims because they strive for peace in Europe.

She expressed appreciation to the Chairperson of the NCOP for availing himself to meet with the delegation and reiterated the invitation to Chairperson of the NCOP to lead a delegation to Hungary at a mutually convenient date.

5. General outcome of the courtesy call

The deliberations and outcomes of the meeting were as follows:

- 1) The Chairperson of the NCOP undertook to report to the Executive Authority about the meeting with the Hungarian delegation.
- 2) Appreciation of South Africa's role in peace-making was expressed.
- 3) The idea of having international conferences by government of Hungary and countries engaged in war to be invited was supported.
- 4) The courtesy call was a success.

6. Recommendations and/or Action by Parliament

None