**African Christian Democratic Party**

**11 July 2019

ACDP Parliament
Budget Vote 6: International Relations
Speech by: The Leader of the ACDP, Rev Kenneth Meshoe MP**

**ACDP says 125 foreign missions for a country of our size is unnecessary**

* **calls on minister to downscale foreign missions that do not contribute to SA’s economic growth**

“Chairperson,

The ACDP would like to congratulate Honourable Dr Naledi Pandor on her appointment to head this very important committee on International Relations and Cooperation.

I also want to give credit to my former colleague, Cheryllyn Dudley, who did a sterling job while she served on this committee for many years. In one of her many speeches she said, and I want to quote: “the ACDP will support all government efforts to promote peace and sustainable development within South Africa, regionally and globally.” This position will not change as we are committed to peace, reconciliation and nationbuilding.

The ACDP is aware that pressure is constantly put on South Africa to take sides in many conflicts. We would like to encourage government, to – despite the pressure – remain committed to meaningful and positive engagement with all stakeholders, particularly when dealing with Middle East conflicts. Government should attempt to not only remain impartial at all times, but also to convince those in conflict that peaceful negotiations are the only way to restore peace, reconciliation and stability in their land, and, we hope, will bring them prosperity too.

Our peacekeeping forces have, to date, managed to remain impartial in the missions they have undertaken on the continent, and for that, we are grateful. The ACDP would like to see government maintain the same position of impartiality wherever South African is involved in mediation elsewhere in the world, including the Middle East.

Chairperson, the mandate of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation, is to, among other things, coordinate and align South Africa’s policy abroad and monitor developments in the international arena. It is also to contribute to the creation of an enabling international environment for South Africa to do trade abroad.

Furthermore, according to the National Development Plan 2030, the vision of this department is “to create a better South Africa and contribute to a better and safer Africa in a better world.”

According to the 2019 Estimates of National Expenditure, the department realises its mandate mainly through its 125 diplomatic missions in the 108 countries in which South Africa has representation.

As such, the department’s spending is mainly on compensation of employees, including allowances payable to transferred staff in terms of the Foreign Service dispensation policy and the development of infrastructure.

The ACDP is of the opinion that 125 diplomatic missions is too much for a country of our size. We would therefore propose that the number of missions be downscaled as a cost-cutting measure, particularly where we have representation in countries that do not contribute to the growth of our economy.”

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