**MINISTRY**

**INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND COOPERATION**

**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

# QUESTION FOR WRITTTEN REPLY NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

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**1523. Mr NI Hlengwa (IFP) to ask the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation:**

Given the current political and economic challenges affecting the neighbouring countries of the republic, and in light of the impact on the Republic of the influx of undocumented immigrants fleeing their countries and seeking better opportunities in the Republic, what, (a) strategies does the Government have in place to assist the affected states to stabilise politically and economically and (b) are the challenges if any, towards those endeavours? NW1726E

**REPLY:**

South Africa is one of the biggest economies in Africa and has always been an attractive destination to citizens from neighbouring countries seeking better economic opportunities. Although South Africa, the region and Africa face similar challenges of poverty, inequality and unemployment, South Africa is seen as providing better economic opportunities. Inevitably this has also attracted illegal and irregular migration.

South Africa’s Foreign Policy priorities are centred on the region first and in Africa, being cognisant of the fact that South Africa’s prosperity and her ability to address inequality, poverty and unemployment are interlinked and inseparable to that of the region and Africa. In this regard, South Africa has bilateral engagements with all the countries in the region and eight countries have engagements on the highest level of Bi-National Commissions. It is through cooperation within these mechanisms that South Africa seeks to address the challenges within the areas of peace and security, social, economics and politics.