**MINISTRY**

**INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND COOPERATION**

 **REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NO.: 3701**

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**Ms N R Mashabela (EFF) to ask the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation:**

What are the details of the Government’s policy position regarding the voting structures and powers of the United Nations Security Council and General Assembly? **NW4274E**

**REPLY:**

Honourable Member, South Africa's participation in multilateral institutions is guided by the country's foreign policy objectives based on its vision of "a better South Africa, a better Africa and a better world". Our foreign policy is informed by our constitutional values and principles, national values and interests and strategic considerations based on domestic and international imperatives.

Our participation is further aligned with an understanding of the nexus that exists between peace, security and sustainable development. Consequently, South Africa's approach and voting patterns in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and the General Assembly (GA) resonates strongly with the African Union's (AUs) aspirational goals contained in the Agenda 2063 and its Ten (10) Year Implementation Plan of contributing to peace and security of "Silencing the Guns by the year 2020".

South Africa further upholds the principle that there could be no peace without development, thus the advancement of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda Goals adopted by UN Heads of State and Government in New York in September 2015 is essential requirement to continental efforts towards advancing the achievement of the African Union Agenda 2063.

Additional information on voting structures and powers in the United Nations Security Council and United Nations General Assembly is provided below:

**Voting structures and powers of the United Nations Security Council**

* Each member of the United Nations Security Council has one vote. There are two sets of decisions that are taken by voting, namely on procedural matters and non-procedural matters which the latter could be vetoed by the Permanent Five. The UNSC is the only organ of the United Nations which has been conferred with the power to take decisions with a binding force in line with the "Purposes and Principles of the United Nations" in discharging its duties of maintaining international peace and security.

**Voting structures and powers of the General Assembly**

The Government policy position regarding voting structures and powers of the United Nations General Assembly is guided by the following provisions of the United Nations General Assembly's Rules of Procedure, Rules 82 to 90 on Voting:

* Each member of the General Assembly have one vote. Decisions of the General Assembly on important questions shall be made by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting, for instance in matters pertaining to international peace and security, the election of the non-permanent members of the Security Council, etc. On the other hand, decisions of the General Assembly on questions other than those considered important that requires a two­ thirds majority, shall be made by a simple majority of the members present and voting, i.e. affirmative and negative votes only; abstentions are considered as not voting.