

Budget Vote 6: International Relations and Cooperation

Speech by Willem Faber MP, DA Member on the Portfolio Committee on International Relations and Cooperation

Good afternoon Chairperson/Speaker, Members of Parliament and dignitaries.

The Department of International Relations' allocated Budget for this financial year is R6, 6-Billion-rand *which* decreased by 1, 3 % compared to 2021/22 financial year, while expenditure is expected to increase at an annual rate of 1.5%.

Currency fluctuation of the Rand shows that in April 2022 – R14.60 was worth one dollar, and now around R18.40 *compared* to the dollar. This means that the same R1 Billion rand in 2022 is now worth – 14, 2 million dollars less in value while the larger part of this department's R6, 6 Billion gets spent in Dollars.

The main reason for the decrease of the South African Rand is because of poor ANC Political and Diplomatic decisions taken, while on the other hand, we have a President collecting valuable dollars on his farm in his - secret Furniture business.

On Program 1 – (Administration) and still the main expense to the Department's budget.

South Africa has one of the largest diplomatic corps in the world with salaries for employees amounting to R2.8 billion rand.

Some of this seems to be a complete waste of money with our embassies headed predominantly by political appointments, used by the ANC presidents to reward comrades by collecting money and not adding any value to South Africa's economy.

Government should shrink this footprint of ours especially where we don't find any financial and economic benefit where we currently have **125 diplomatic missions** represented in **108 countries**. South Africa also has a **property portfolio of 127 state-owned properties** and **more than 1000 rented properties** abroad.

ARF and Africa

South Africa is one of the largest contributors to the African Union (AU) with its membership programs and fee being over R1 billion rand.

The African Renaissance and International Co-operation Fund Act (Act No 51 of 2000) was promulgated on 22 January 2001. The Act provides to enhance international co-operation with and on the African Continent and to confirm the Republic of South Africa's commitment to Africa. Then in 2012, President Zuma added Cuba to Africa (similar to his fire pool at his Nkandla residence) with an R350 Million Economic Assistance Package through the ARF.

Then last year Minister Pandor wanted to donate a further R50 Million rand to Cuba – we can just be thankful that the courts stopped her in her tracks.

Minister, this ANC romantic and emotional connectivity with Cuba is taking food from the tables of many poor South Africans. It is mindboggling that you can still be adamant to put Cuba before South Africans who suffer every day to provide for their families.

The ARF Funds Total Net assets now decreased from R797 million rand in 2018 to R394 million in 2022. It is time that National treasury takes the ARF away from International Relations. (1.30 min)

BRICKS and NDB

Of the five members, only China has achieved sustained and extensive growth while the economies of Brazil, South Africa and Russia stagnated.

In conclusion - We as South Africa should not be “penny wise- pound foolish. South Africa’s trade with the West (US and EU) last year was over R990 Billion rand while the trade with Russia and China only add up to just under R500 Billion rand. Siding with Russia and the International Criminal Court (ICC) debacle will eventually alienate us from the West will destroy our economy (the bit that is still left-before we remove this ANC government at the Voting poles).