

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS ACTIVITIES AT THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT.

1. Introduction

The Department of Social Development's international relations strategy, in line with the SA Government strategic thrust, is aimed at achieving the following objectives:

- Harmonization and integration of social development policies and strategies through active participation in relevant regional, continental and multilateral structures.
- Promotion of bilateral activities that make the most effective contribution to poverty reduction.
- Mobilization of official development assistance to advance capacity building and strengthen government programmes re-poverty alleviation and socio-economic development.

The Department of Social Development's international relations strategy, seeks to advocate for:

- Rebuilding of family and community relations.
- An integrated poverty eradication strategy.
- A comprehensive social security system.
- Eradicating violence against women and children, older persons and other vulnerable groups.
- Fighting HIV and AIDS.
- Youth development.

- Improving accessibility to social welfare services.
- Improving services to people with disabilities.
- Transformation of social development sector.

2. Partnership – the basis for cooperation

The Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development, which was adopted at the World Summit for Social Development in 1995, re-committed Governments to an improved and strengthened framework for international, regional and sub-regional cooperation for social development, in a spirit of partnership. Cooperation involves collective and collaborative efforts at the national and international levels among partners for the realization of agreed social development objectives.

The MTSF 2009-2014 document developed by the ICTS Cluster serves as a guide for departments on areas to focus on. The Cluster is responsible to ensure that the pursuit of international cooperation, trade and security objectives contributes to the attainment of the domestic imperatives of fighting poverty and accelerating sustainable economic development. The cluster's work will also be directed by the government's identified priorities. As per Cluster's directive, departments are expected to focus on strategic priority Number 8 (Pursuing African advanced and enhanced international cooperation). The following are current initiatives in the Department of Social Development.

2.1 Continued prioritization of the African Continent

The focus of South Africa's engagements on the African Continent is to promote development, contribute to the resolution of conflicts and the building of an environment in which socio-economic development can take place. The Government's view is that the socio-economic development cannot take place in the absence of peace and stability, as these constitute to the necessary conditions for sustainable socio-economic development. Similarly, socio-economic development is critical for addressing the root

causes of conflict and instability. The Department aims at ensuring that the social development is prioritized and placed high on the agenda of various structures

AU Population Commission

The African Population Commission (APC) was established in 1995 as the premier body to promote coherent population policies in Africa. The Africa Population Commission is composed of the highest officials of National Population Commissions and/or analogous institutions dealing with population and development issues of Member States and submits the results of its work to the policy organs of the Union for consideration and adoption.

The Africa Population Commission is charged with all matters affecting AU Member States in the field of population and development as well as reproductive health. In 2005, the APC was revitalized through the appointment of the AU Commission as its sole secretariat.

The Department has always played a leading role in the region. The AU has not as yet confirmed the date and venue of the meeting for 2012.

AU Ministers of Social Development

The Department participated during activities of the **AU Labour and Social Affairs Commission** that dealt with employment, labour and social affairs issues. Because most African Ministries of Labour also deals with Social Development issues, there is always an overlap of social development issues. The Commission has now been split in two and the Department participates on the above. This forum deals with issues related to children, older persons, poverty eradication, persons with disabilities.

Minister participated during the first meeting of AU Ministers in 2010 and the next meeting will be held in 2012.

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

The Department signed an agreement with the DRC focusing on the following:

- Capacity building
- Policy development
- Exchange
- programmes
- Training of social services professionals

Much work has been done with DRC as a team was placed in the DRC for a period of a year and assisted in the training of more than 200 civil servants in project management and human resource management; organizational review; strengthening of partnership with civil society and donors. The Department recently participated during the RSA/DRC Bi-National Commission where departments were directed to strengthen partnerships with DRC. The Department intends inviting a delegation from DRC for a bilateral visit during the first half of 2012.

Zimbabwe

The agreement with Zimbabwe is ready for signature and focuses on the following:

- Poverty eradication
- Children
- HIV / AIDS
- Persons with disabilities
- Older persons
- Disaster relief
- Substance abuse
- NPO collaboration

The parties have exchanged visits in 2007 and 2008 respectively and shared information and experiences on issues contained in the MoU. An agreement for cooperation was signed in November 2011. The Department serves on the

RSA/Zimbabwe Committee dealing with the issue of unaccompanied minors. A meeting of working Groups has been planned for early 2012.

2.2 Southern African Development Community (SADC)

SADC, as a Regional Economic Community (REC), is one of the recognized building blocs of the AU. SADC remains the vehicle for South African policy and action to achieve regional integration and development within all priority development sectors.

The Department participates during SADC activities and recently participated during a Ministerial meeting on Youth and Vulnerable Children.

SADC Employment and Labour Commission

The Department participates in the SADC Labour and Employment Committee since there has been no follow-up to the past SADC Ministers of Social Development meetings hosted by South Africa. SADC employment and labour Commission, deals with implementation of Employment and Labour policies and the strategies to sustainable high growth rates to alleviate and ultimately eradicate high levels of poverty in the region. The Commission also deals with social development related issues.

SADC Population Commission

The Department hosted the last Population Commission and always plays a leading role.

2.3 Strengthening South-South relations

South Africa shares similar positions on political, economic and social issues with other countries of the South and in this context relations and cooperation with countries of the South in Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and the Middle East continue to grow both multilaterally and bilaterally.

IBSA Trilateral Cooperation

The Department participates in the IBSA Working Group on Social Development which has now finalized the IBSA Social Development Strategy. The Working Group is coordinated by Brazil. The Department has taken the lead in trying to revive Working Group on Social Development.

2.4 Strengthening relations with strategic formations of the North

The Department will garner support from the developed countries of the North for South Africa's national priorities. Furthermore, engagement with the North is aimed at advancing the development needs of the Continent and the South.

European Union

The Department participates in EU activities and a Statement of Intent on Youth and Employment has been drafted is being negotiated. The Department has also participated on forums aimed at sharing experiences on social security.

The Department hopes to finalize the agreement during the next RSA/EU meetings in 2012 and to agree on a project on youth.

OECD

The OECD Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs helps member states to formulate policies to boost employment and improve social welfare by reforming labour markets, improving the performance of health systems and designing international migration policies that promote economic growth and development.

South Africa and the Department in particular participates in the activities of OECD and is represented by the Social Policy Branch.

2.5 Strengthening political and economic relations

The strengthening of political and economic relations is informed by government's policy priorities including the need for enhanced economic diplomacy. The focus in the medium term will be to:

- Promote and expand bilateral partnerships that are aimed at advancing the economic interests of South Africa through structured mechanisms.
- Strengthen people to people cooperation through civil society organizations and other likeminded stakeholders.

Mauritius

The Department signed an agreement with the Ministry focusing on the following:

- Social Assistance to Vulnerable Communities
- HIV / AIDS
- Drugs and Substance Abuse and Rehabilitation
- Persons with Disabilities
- Capacity Building for Civil Society Organizations
- Implementation of the SADC and UN decision, including the NEPAD Programme

The Directorate received a request for support on the training of persons with disabilities, however funds are not available.

South Sudan

The Department has a draft agreement with the Ministry focusing on the following:

- Families

- Youth
- Disability
- NPO collaboration
- Population and development

A delegation from SASSA recently visited Sudan to share experiences on social security. A proposal has been made for a multidisciplinary team to visit Sudan.

Angola

The Department signed an agreement with the Ministry focusing on the following:

- Social integration
- Food security and poverty eradication
- Disability
- Child protection
- HIV
- Persons with disabilities

DSD implemented the agreement with MINARS over the past five years and both Parties benefited from the various exchanges undertaken. The Parties agreed in writing to review cooperation and agreed on a new Implementation Plan to be finalized at the next meeting. Due to financial challenges the Department of Social Development opted to host the Angolan delegation as opposed to sending a delegation.

The Department hosted the Deputy-Minister from Angola on 07 August 2009 where the delegation also had an opportunity to meet the Minister. The Angolans were looking at the possible assistance and support for Angolans who served in military structures who would want to return back to Angola. Unfortunately the Angolans could not come back with concrete details of this initiative. They however promised to carry out further

investigations. The Directorate is in consultation with Angola in order to strengthen the collaboration.

Mali

The Department signed an agreement with the Ministry focusing on the following:

- Capacity building
- Training of social workers

There has been exchange of visits looking at the training of social workers. The Department is in consultations with the University of Venda in order to develop a programme of action.

Tanzania

The Department hosted a delegation from Tanzania in 2007, discussed and exposed the delegates to child participation approaches. The DSD plans to visit Tanzania to explore community development. The parties agreed to formalize cooperation. Tanzania is an important member of SADC and has developed good programmes in Community Development and has expressed a desire to exchange experiences on programmes involving children.

Ghana

Kenya

Minister met her counterpart from Kenya in December 2010 where a need for sharing experiences on social security was expressed. A delegation from Kenya visited the Department in early 2011 while the Department reciprocated by visiting Kenya in August 2011.

Benin

The Department participated during joint bilateral meetings with Benin and a draft agreement is already in place. A team has since visited Benin and an agreement was discussed. The Minister is willing to visit South Africa for the signing of the agreement.

Uganda

The Minister participated during the State Visit and an agreement was discussed. The agreement, which is in the process of being finalized include the following: HIV and AIDS; poverty eradication, children and persons with disabilities.

Namibia

The Department hosted a delegation towards the end of 2009. The delegation proposed to explore Auxiliary Social Work and visited HWSETA, SACSSP, where they learned about registration and accreditation. They also had an opportunity to visit a District office in Gauteng where they had a firsthand experience on the consultation process. At the end of the visit, the delegation put together the findings of their visit and will revert back to the department if there is an opportunity of formalizing relations.

Tunisia

The Minister participated during a State visit by the Deputy-President and an agreement was agreed upon which focuses on the following: poverty eradication, children, persons with disabilities. Because of the current situation in Tunisia the agreement has been put on hold

Cuba

The Department signed an agreement with the Ministry focusing on the following:

- Security and Social Assistance
 - development
- Coverage of Social
Poverty Mitigation
Community

- Services to vulnerable groups, including children, the elderly, the young, people with disabilities and women
- Training of Social Professionals in various fields
- Information and community data

The Department recently coordinated Masupa-Tsela Youth programme which seeks to replicate the Cuban Social Work Initiative with a view of integrating with current initiatives directed at recruiting and training Community Development Workers and Social Auxiliary Workers. The programme was targeted at the unemployed youth in South Africa. More than 200 youths from different provinces have been trained.

USA

The Department signed an agreement with the City of New York focusing on the following:

- Customer care
- HIV / AIDS
- Social security
- Monitoring and evaluation

There was an exchange of visits and information focusing more on social security and HIV and AIDS. The Department will participate during bi-national commission activities

China

The Minister and delegation visited China in November 2009 where a Statement of Intent was signed. The Department hosted several delegations from China to share experiences on NPO and persons with persons with disabilities.

Jamaica

Consultations were initiated during the Departmental visit to Jamaica and a draft agreement is in place. The focus is on community development.

Canada

Areas of collaboration with Canada include:

- Children and Youth
in Care

Canada has done some good work on social development and the Department can benefit from this cooperation.

Sweden

The Department hosted a delegation from Sweden and there is an intention of cooperating with Sweden on:

- Social security
- Care and services
to older persons and people with disabilities
- Poverty alleviation

Mexico

During the 43rd Session of the Commission of Social Development, Minister Josephina Vazquez Mota and former Minister Skweyiya discussed and agreed on possible areas of collaboration. The visit by the Mexican Deputy-Minister, Dr Miguel Szekely on 25-27 March 2005 was aimed at consolidating relations between South Africa and Mexico in the field of Social Development, exchanging information on policies, instruments and activities, and discussing the agreement.

The agreement on cooperation was signed in 2006 and focuses on the following:

- Implementation and continuance of strategies to overcome poverty and inequality
- Implementation, monitoring and continuance and evaluation of programmes with the aim of eradicating extreme poverty
- Institutional organization for the implementation of strategies for reducing poverty
- Poverty and inequality measurement and indicators
- Any other area of interest agreed upon the parties

Since then the Department has visited Mexico on several occasions and exchanged experiences on:

- Reform of retirement provisions, this information was eventually used by the Department on the current work on retirement reform as directed by Cabinet.
- Lessons from Oportunidades
- Sharing on SA position on conditionalities
- Impact evaluation of the Child Support Grants
- Social assistance

During 2009 there was an exchange of information on the following:

- Early Childhood Development Programme
- Jobs Training Programme

- Community Development Programme

This has been going on very well and has been beneficial to both sides.

Planned activities include the following:

- The Mexican delegation was supposed to visit RSA during the first half of the year but will not because of the JBC. The plan is for the Departmental delegation to travel to Mexico early for the JBC.
- Both sides are now ready to explore and initiate the tri-lateral cooperation with Chile.

Projected activities include the following:

- Review Implementation Plan
- Finalize tri-lateral cooperation with Chile on ECD.

Chile

Areas of collaboration include the following:

- Family model through the Bridge Programme
- Early Childhood Development Programme

Singapore

Areas of collaboration include the following:

- Families

- Care and Services to older persons

Serbia

Areas of collaboration include the following:

- Care and support to families focusing on women, children, people with disabilities and older persons
- Social Security

Brazil

Deputy Minister (now Minister) accompanied by several MEC's signed two agreements with counterparts in Brazil. Areas of collaboration include the following:

- Poverty eradication and sustainable community development
- Civil society participation and research – development institutions
- Strengthening of services to Vulnerable Groups, particularly children in conflict with the law and substance abuse programme

The Department is finalizing a plan on poverty eradication based on the Brazilian model. Minister of Social Development was supposed to visit RSA in February but this has since been postponed because of her poor health.

2.6 Participate in the global system of governance

South Africa works actively towards global political and socio-economic stability and security within the multilateral system. In this context, South Africa will therefore promote development, security, human rights and international law through its participation in the international for a, notably the United Nations (UN) system and its specialized agencies. The Department participates in the following Commissions:

Commission of Social Development

The Commission for Social Development (CSocD) is a functional commission of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations. It consists of 46 members elected by ECOSOC.

Since the convening of the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen in 1995, the Commission has been the key UN body in charge of the follow-up and implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and Program of Action. .

Each Year since 1995, the Commission has taken up key social development themes as part of its follow-up to the outcome of the Copenhagen summit. The Commission's Programme of Work contains all documentation of the Commission for each of its sessions since the summit. South Africa is an active member of the Commission and leads the NEPAD resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and China

Population and Development Commission

A Population Commission was established by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 3(III) of 3 October 1946. In its resolution 49/128 of 19 December 1994, the General Assembly decided that the commission should be renamed the Commission on Population and Development. In the same resolution, the assembly decided that it, the Council and the Commission should constitute three-tiered intergovernmental mechanism that would play the primary role in the follow-up to the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, and that the commission, as a functional commission assisting the council, would monitor, review and assess the implementation of the Programme of Action at the national, regional and international levels and advise the council thereon.

Under its terms of reference the Commission is to assist the council in:

- Arranging for studies and advising the council on:
 - ❖ Population issues and trends
 - ❖ Integrating population and development strategies
 - ❖ Population and related development policies and programmes

- ❖ Provision of population assistance, upon request, to developing countries and, on temporary basis, to countries with economies in transition; and
 - ❖ Any other population and development question on which either the principal or the subsidiary organs of the United Nations or the specialized agencies may seek advice.
- Monitoring, reviewing and assessing the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development at the national, regional and global levels, identifying reasons for success and failure, and advising the Council thereon
 - Providing appropriate recommendations to the Council on the basis of an integrated consideration of the reports and issues related to the implementation of the Programme of Action.

The Commission is composed of 47 Member States elected by the Economic and Social Council for a period of four years on the basis of geographic distribution. Representatives should have a relevant background in population and development. It meets typically every two to three years until 1994, after which it has met once a year. The Department plays a leading role during this Commission.

Commission on Status of Women

The Commission on Status of Women (hereafter referred to as “CSW” or “the Commission”) is a functional commission of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), dedicated exclusively to gender equality and advancement of women. It is the principal global policy-making body. Every year, representatives of Member States gather at United Nations Headquarters in New York to evaluate progress on gender equality and advancement of women worldwide.

The Commission was established by ECOSOC resolution 11(II) of 21 June 1946 with the aim of preparing recommendations and reports to the Council on urgent problems requiring immediate attention in the field of women’s rights.

Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

The Commission develops, monitors and reviews the implementation of the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice programme and facilitates the coordination of its activities. The Commission provides substantive and organizational direction for the quinquennial United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. The United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme Network that supports the implementation of the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice programme and contributes to the work of the commission. The Commission acts as the governing body of the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Fund, the United Nations Fund that provides resources for promoting technical assistance in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice carried out by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

Commission on Narcotic Drugs

The Commission on Narcotic Drugs is the central policymaking body within the United Nations system dealing with drug-related matters. The Commission monitors the world drug situation, develops strategies on international drug control and recommends measures to combat the world drug problem, including through reducing demand for drugs, promoting alternative development initiatives and adopting supply reduction measures. The Commission provides Member States with a venue to exchange expertise, experience and information on drug-related matters and develop a coordinated response. It also has functions under the international drug control treaties, for example with regard to the substances under international control.

International Social Services

International Social Service helps individuals, children and families confronted with social problems involving two, or more, countries as a consequence of international migration or displacement. It is active in round 140 countries through a network of national branches, affiliated bureaus and correspondents. Each year, it provides services to more than 50 000 persons throughout the world.

DDG: Welfare Services serves on the Board of ISS

Partners in Population and Development

PPD is an intergovernmental alliance of 24 “developing” countries. They hold a permanent observer seat in the Un General Assembly. Their mission is to assist each other developing countries to address successfully the sexual and reproductive health rights, including family planning and HIV/AIDS, population and development challenges through south-south collaboration.

Minister serves on the PPD Board.

International Social Security Association

ISSA is the principal international institution bringing together social security agencies and organizations. The ISSA’s aim is to promote dynamic social security as the social dimension in a globalizing world by supporting excellence in social security administration.

Three officials, including the Director-General, serves on three ISSA Committees.

3 STRENGTHENING GOVERNANCE

- DSD has developed “Guidelines on Coordination of IR engagements” which addresses issues such as finances, insurance, conduct during meetings and reporting.
- The Department participates and reports to the ICTS Cluster, Internal Coordinating Structure, MANCO and the IR Coordinating Committee where provinces and other relevant structures participate.
- DSD has drafted the IR engagement strategy based on the Government White Paper on International Relations.
- Intranet page on IR is available where officials can access and post all reports on activities.

4. MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS AND BENEFITS OF IR ENGAGEMENTS

4.1 The Department successfully hosted a number of major conferences which include the World Social Security Forum in Cape Town in 2010. This Forum was attended by more than a thousand international delegates

4.2 Three Departmental officials serve on the Technical Committee of ISSA while Dr Mabetoa serves on the Board of International Social Services

4.3 A Departmental team that was placed in the DRC co-ordinated the training of more than 200 officials on basic office management; Project Management and Human Resource Management.

4.4 For the past five years the Department has been leading the negotiations during the UN Commission on Social Development on behalf of the Africa Group and the Group of 77 and China. The Department has always played a leading role in various UN Commissions

4.5 Participating during various conferences has contributed to capacity building of all levels of officials

4.6 The Department has not only contributed to capacity building within the African continent but many developing countries visit the Department for benchmarking exercises

5. CONCLUSION

The Department strives to establish solid, long-term partnerships based on trust with various partners and other participants in development co-operation as a basis for poverty reduction