

A REVIEW OF THE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA'S LEADING ROLE
ON THE AFRICAN CONTINENT

by

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper is a review of the Republic of South Africa's presumptive leadership role on the African continent. It proceeds from the fundamental premise that following its democratisation in 1994, the country was able to make a decisive break with the past of isolation and scorn and returned to the family of civilised nations. Owing to the country's economic dominance and level of development coupled with the moral authority of President Mandela, South Africa was universally expected to assume a leadership role on the African continent.

Against that backcloth, the paper proceeds to identify key aspects of this leadership role, with emphasis on the following issues or aspects:

- South Africa's role in determining the pace and direction of African affairs, especially in such areas as socio-economic renaissance or regeneration of the African continent as evidenced by President Mbeki's involvement in the conceptualisation and articulation of the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD).
- South Africa's contribution towards the finding of "African Solutions to African Problems", especially as regards conflict prevention, management and resolution in Africa's troubled regions.
- South Africa's response to current and emerging challenges, especially regarding such issues as the promotion of respect for and observance of human rights; good governance, the rule of law and democracy.
- Identification of areas of tension and potential conflicts with other regional powers and leaders.
- The global context in which South Africa's foreign policy is being developed and implemented, with particular emphasis on cross-border spillovers.

- It is generally acceptable that South African non-state entities such as civil society, academic institutions, statutory undertakers and utilities such as Eskom, Telkom, Spoornet, Transnet, mining and financial houses, retail enterprises etc, are increasingly playing a very important role in terms of infrastructure and socio-economic development of the African continent. But these “social partners” were not included in the terms of reference. Furthermore, their activities could not be comprehended in a paper whose scope is limited to 15-20 pages. The paper is also confined to those organs of state responsible for the formulation and implementation of foreign policy. This is in line with the terms of reference as laid down by the consultant.
- It should also be pointed out that the situation in Africa is very fluid. Treaties are painstakingly negotiated, solemnly signed, but broken the very following day (Liberia, DRC and Burundi).

The broad conclusion is that although there were perceived weaknesses in the formulation and implementation of foreign policy by the “new” government in the early years following the attainment of majority rule in 1994, nevertheless the country has begun to play a leading role in determining or setting the pace and direction of African affairs. This role will be more pronounced under NEPAD and the African Union.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The promulgation of South Africa's Interim Constitution (the Interim Constitution) at the end of 1993 marked one of the most momentous milestones in the country's history, as indeed in the whole world. Viewed against the past of isolation and scorn by the international community, a past in which the country was indeed a pariah in the eyes of the international community, the fact that the negotiating parties at the now famous Kempton Park were able to arrive at a peaceful, negotiated constitutional change should surely rank among the most remarkable examples of political rapprochement and civic accords of the twentieth century (Currie and de Waal, 2001:2).

The Constitution agreed upon at Kempton Park, although a compromise document, facilitated the country's clean break with apartheid and provided a "historic bridge between the past of a deeply divided society characterised by strife, conflict, untold suffering and injustice, and a future founded on the recognition of human rights, democracy and peaceful coexistence ..."¹

On the international front the Interim Constitution facilitated South Africa's return to what the then Secretary General of the United Nations, His Excellency Dr Boutros Boutros Ghali auspiciously termed "the family of civilised nations."² In similar vein, Currie and de Waal

describe that constitution as "a beacon of hope in a world plagued by conflict,

1 See the post-amble to the Interim Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 200 of 1993.

2 Speech by His Excellency Dr. Boutros Boutros Ghali at the inauguration of the first democratically elected President of the Republic of South Africa, Dr. Nelson Mandela, 1994.

poverty and the failure of government (2001:2).

Against this background, this paper assesses South Africa's leadership role and influence on the African continent. It proceeds from the fundamental premise that at the time of its first democratic elections in 1994, South Africa was overwhelmingly expected to play a leading role in articulating and determining the pace and direction of African affairs and in finding "African solutions to African problems." This presumptive leadership role was, of course, anchored on the country's economic dominance, level of development and the moral authority of the leadership of the African National Congress (Gelb, 2001). The main focus of inquiry will be on the following:

- South Africa's role in finding solutions to African problems, with emphasis on conflict management, prevention and resolution.
- South Africa's role in articulating and promoting collective action by weak African states to address the challenges of development on a continent where the vast majority of its population subsist on the margin of absolute poverty, eking out a living on less than US \$ 1 a day.
- South Africa's role in promoting respect for and observance of basic human rights and fundamental freedoms, good governance, rule of law and democracy.

Here, it will be necessary to ascertain South Africa's role in articulating the common values which are so essential if Africa is to shed her image as a continent whose human rights record is stained by genocide, summary executions and arrests, by involuntary disappearances and wide-spread torture, by the killings of unarmed demonstrators and detention without trial for reasons of belief and conviction. In the Southern African region in particular, there are nearly 500,000 refugees, returnees and asylum seekers. Given South Africa's moral high ground, it is imperative to assess South Africa's contribution to some of these pressing problems.

- Identification of areas of tension and potential conflicts, especially with major regional and sub-regional players such as Nigeria/Senegal in West Africa, Libya and Egypt in North Africa, Uganda and Kenya in East Africa, Ethiopia in the Horn of African and Zimbabwe in Southern Africa.
- The global context in which South Africa's foreign policy is being developed and implemented.

2. **SOUTH AFRICA'S FOREIGN POLICY FRAMEWORK**

Foreign policies are closely linked to the nation's survival and the quality of its way of life. Such policies can be either regulatory or distributive vis a vis other countries.³

Furthermore, foreign policy is most often influenced by the domestic vision of the state in question.

In the case of South Africa, the primary objective of the South African government is to develop a better life for all citizens by generating wealth and providing security.⁴ In a 1997 speech to the Department of Foreign Affairs, the then Deputy President Thabo Mbeki referred to the need for South Africa to "walk on two legs" in its foreign policy, to cultivate strong relations with the "South" as well as strategic relations with the industrialised countries. This echoes views expressed earlier by other government leaders who presented South Africa as a "bridge" between the "North" and the "South".⁵ In seeking to develop this role as a leader

3 D. Van Niekerk et al, Governance, Politics, and Policy in South Africa. Cape Town: Oxford University Press, Southern Africa, 2001, pp91, 232-235.

4 Foreign Policy Perspectives in a Democratic South Africa. <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/policy/foreign.html>; Van Niekerk, Ibid.

5 Mbeki, T. Speech to the Unites States Corporate Council on Africa. April 1997. Gelb S., South Africa's Role and Importance in Africa and for the Development of the African Agenda. October 2001. See also J. Cilliers, "An Emerging South African Foreign Policy

of the South, the African continent has a crucial place in South Africa's foreign policy. We shall return to this theme hereunder. It suffices to note that South Africa's foreign policy objectives are essentially an outward projection of the country's domestic imperatives. South Africa's foreign policy objectives may, therefore, be summarised as follows:

- promote democratisation and respect for human rights;
- prevent conflicts and promote peaceful resolution of disputes;
- advance sustainable development and alleviate poverty.

<http://www/and.org.za/ancdocs/policy/foreign.html>

A lot has been written about South Africa's foreign policy and relations and on South Africa's presumptive leadership role in Africa in general and in the Southern African region in particular (Chakoodza, 1990; G. Mills, 1990, 1994, 2000, 2001; J. Daniels, 1995; M. Nkuhlu, 1995; R. Suttner, 1996; H. Solomon, 1997; W. Carlsneas and M. Muller, 1997; T. Mbeki, 1997, 1998; F. Ahwireng-Obeng and P. McGowan, 1998; R. Davies, 1998; Cilliers, 1999; M.W. Makgoba, 1999; P. Mathoma, J. Mills and J. Stremlau (eds), 2000; J. Taylor and P. Williams, 2001; S. Gelb, 2001).

In a paper of this nature, with its limited scope and objectives, it is not advisable to refer to all this impressive body of academic opinion. However, the paper will be incomplete without a brief reference to the views of some of the writers. Stephen Gelb's erudite paper explores the evolution of South Africa's stance towards Africa since 1994, examines how it has approached its presumptive leadership role on the continent and suggests that the New Partnership for Africa's Development (formerly known as the New African Initiative) (NAI) represents the clearest expression thus far of the South African national interest on the continent, which is to improve economic and political governance as a basis for enhanced economic development.⁶

Gelb starts by observing that in the wake of South Africa's democratisation in 1994, the country was universally expected to assume a leadership role in the African continent, given its relative economic size and level of development. But the country has found it difficult to establish the balanced approach required and make its impact felt. He identifies the following factors as having been crucial towards the shaping of South Africa's policy towards Africa:

- a) The continent's failure to develop;
- b) South Africa's relative economic dominance, especially in Southern Africa, which is in part the consequence of the rest of the continent's low level of economic development. This dominance has, in turn, shaped one important position - realism - and contrasted with an alternative "idealist" perspective which was strongly influenced by a third factor, namely the ANC's history as a

liberation movement, substantially dependent upon a number of African countries as it struggled against apartheid during 30 years of exile.

- c) The international context, and in particular the process of globalization which,

6 Gelb, Ibid, Note 5.

in turn, places particular pressures on national states, which most African states are ill-equipped to address. Globalization has also increased the importance of cross-border externalities, the impact with societies of developments elsewhere in the global and regional economies.

Gelb points out that South Africa's economic dominance in the region led to the realist approach in foreign policy which in turn rested upon a combination of promoting economic interests, in the form of flows of South African exports and investments to the region with a view to enhancing domestic growth and employment creation.

Table 1: South Africa and SADC - Basic Economic Indicators

1995 (unless indicated)	South Africa	SADC	SA % of SADC
Surface area (000 sq km)	1,221	6,932	18
Population (millions)	39	135	29
GNP (\$ bn)	125	165	76
GNP per capita (\$)	3,160	1,225	258
GNP per capita (PPP \$)	5,030	2,572	196
Exports (\$ bn)	27.9	40.3	69
Imports (\$ bn)	30.6	44.6	69
Road network (paved kms 1990)	51,469	86,000	60
Rail network (kms 1990)	23,502	36,000	65
Harbour traffic (mn tons 1991)	104.6	116	90
Rail freight (mn tons pa 1988-90)	183.4	214	86

Source: Gelb, 2001, 14-15.

In this respect, he quotes a former Director-General of the Department of Foreign Affairs as follows:

We need to make a substantial contribution to our government's Reconstruction and Development Programme. By actively encouraging and assisting with trade promotion in the region we are ensuring that new employment opportunities are created in South Africa. The latter objective is also being achieved by

promoting and facilitating the active involvement of the South African private sector in the development and construction projects in the region.⁷

Pragmatic realism, though contested in favour of a principles foreign policy, is also referred to by other writers such as Evans, 1995; Mills, 1997; Ahwireng-Obeng and McGowan, 1998. Gelb elaborates on the third factor which he terms the “moralist view”, rooted in South Africa’s liberation tradition and its success in achieving democracy in South Africa in 1994. He notes that the ANC’s struggle for liberation had not only received financial and logistical support over more than three decades from a wide range of countries both in Africa and elsewhere, but a key factor in its struggle in which it had achieved considerable success, was the demand for countries to impose official sanctions against South Africa, on the ground that apartheid was a crime against humanity. In this respect, in 1994, the ANC Conference emphasized as the central goals for foreign policy the promotion of human rights and democracy, a commitment to development in Africa and a just order. He points out that one strand within this foreign policy approach emphasized the debt owed by South Africa to the rest of Africa for the support provided to the liberation struggle. Some interpreted this debt in markedly financial terms, that is, that South Africa could be expected to shoulder a disproportionately large share of the financial burden of African multilateral organisations. In contrast to this view, a more common understanding of the debt was that South Africa should adopt a stance of “partnership” (rather than selfish hegemony) towards its economic relations with other African countries, to ensure that a disproportionate share of the benefits flowed to the region rather than to itself (Gelb, 2001:19; Mondli Hlatshwayo, 2002, 36-37).

Gelb concludes by pointing out that both approaches, that is, the idealist and

7 As cited by Gelb, op.cit. at p.14, citing Evans (1995).

moralist, reflected a somewhat sterile dichotomy. According to him the realist view was unconcerned with the key stumbling block or blockade to economic growth in Africa, that is, the phenomenon of the weak state while on the other hand the moralist view was unable to provide a vision which could be sustainably implemented. However, both approaches assumed a leadership role for South Africa in the region but on very different premises. In the former, South Africa's leadership role was based entirely on structural issues, that is, the country's dominance within the region, while in the latter approach, structure was assumed not to place constraints upon what was seen as a voluntary choice by the country's political leadership (Gelb, 2001:21). See also Evans, 1995; Mills, 1997; Ahwireng-Obeng and McGowan, 1998.

The other very incisive commentary on South Africa's relations with the African continent is provided by David Black and Larry Swatuk (1997). They argue that these relations are characterized both by continuity and change. They explore these relations within three expanding concentric circles: the "new" South Africa itself, the Southern African region and sub-Saharan Africa as a whole. In their analysis they make two important points. First, the nature of South Africa's engagement with the region was to be dependent on the success Pretoria achieved in addressing the historical injustice and grossly inequitable life chances which were the legacies of the apartheid era. Secondly, South Africa's notion of foreign relations needed to be expanded to include non-state actors such as South African corporations.⁸ In fact, South African business has rapidly moved to position itself as producers of goods and services in a wide range of new markets in Africa such as mining, finance, tourism, retail, telecommunications, brewing etc. (Ahwireng-Obeng and McGowan, 1998).

It is also instructive to point out that some commentators have criticised the "new" government's "failure" to provide the moral leadership many people expected from a government propelled into office by a mass democratic movement, especially

8 See Hussein Solomon, "Fairy Godmother, Hegemon or Partner", Human Security Project, Institute for Security Studies, Monograph Note 13, May 1997. See also Department of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Policy Perspective in a Democratic South Africa.

during the first five years since the democratic elections of 1994. It has been argued that while in exile, the African National Congress demanded a moral stand from the international community against the apartheid regime. It was therefore expected to apply similar principles in the application of South Africa's foreign policy. This human rights driven approach is in stark contrast to the fact that South Africa maintained cordial relations with some unsavoury regimes such as the erstwhile Suharto regime in Indonesia despite widespread support for the struggle of the East Timorese people and widespread human rights abuses; diplomatic and trade links with the Sudanese regime, and silence regarding the struggle of the people of southern Sudan; failure to recognise the Sahrawi Republic soon after coming into office despite the fact that during the apartheid regime the African National Congress was a firm supporter of the struggle of the people of the Western Sahara, led by the Polisario Front, for the right to self-determination.⁹ At that time, one analyst commented:

We are absolutely alone in this regard among all Southern African states.¹⁰

However, it must be pointed out here that South Africa still supports the right to self-determination of the Saharawis.

South Africa has also been severely criticized and condemned by the USA in particular, for its relations with Libya, Syria and Cuba. South Africa has vehemently rejected these criticisms, making it clear that it would not abandon solidarity politics. Schoeman rightly observes that in its defiance of western opinion and preferences in the realm of relations with "outcast" states, especially Libya and Cuba, South Africa had managed to create a space for independent foreign policy-making while putting these relations, in the case of Libya, to good

9 See N. Dixon, "South Africa's Foreign Policy Criticised", <http://www.cls.ethz.ch/gabriel/docs/publications/res>; see also Solomon *Ibid*, Note 8; Van Niekerk *op.cit.* p.234.

10 As quoted by Dixon, *Ibid*, No. 9; see also Solomon *op.cit.*, Note 8.

use in promoting peaceful relations among states (2000:9). The same point can be made in relation to the other countries mentioned above, namely that by maintaining relations with Suharto's Indonesia, Al Bashir's Sudan and the King of Morocco, South Africa used this channel to press for a peaceful, just and durable solution to problems facing these countries (see also Cilliers, 1999:2-3; van Nieuwkerk, 1996; D van Niekerk et al, 2001:233).

The tensions associated with South Africa's foreign policy in the several years after the attainment of majority rule which some authors such as Van Nieuwkerk, Cilliers, and D van Niekerk have perceived as weaknesses, should be understood in relation to the conditions in much of the rest of the continent. As Cilliers poignantly observes, South Africa's foreign policy also sometimes appeared "to try and apply so-called 'first world' standards when dealing with dictatorial rulers and one-party states, while often appearing to fail to come to grips with the realities of the continent and even of South African itself" (1999:3).

The need for caution in foreign policy perspectives had already been identified in late 1996 by the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Honourable Aziz Pahad, when he observed: How do we get human rights enforced and implemented in the international environment?"¹¹

The case for striking a delicate balance which may often involve caustic and unpleasant criticism in such a way as to provide credibility and assurances, especially to the donors from the North and the sensibilities of fellow African leaders was underscored by President Mandela in these seminal words:

Our dream of Africa's rebirth as we enter the new millennium depends as much as anything on each country and each regional

11 Gelb, citing Mills, 1997 at p.4.

grouping on the continent committing itself to the highest principles of democracy, respect for human rights and the basic tenets of good governance ... Among SADC's basic principles are respect for the sovereignty of member states and non-interference in one another's internal affairs. This is the basis of good governance on the inter-state level. But these considerations cannot blunt or totally over-ride our common concern for democracy, human rights and good governance in all of our constituent states. At some point therefore, we as a regional organisation must reflect on how far we support the democratic process and respect for human rights. Can we continue to give comfort to member states whose actions go so diametrically against the values and principles we hold so dear and for which we struggled so long and so hard?

(Mandela, 1997, as cited by Gelb, 2001:28)¹²

Brief Overview of Foreign Policy Successes

Although some authors referred to above have noted some short-comings in the development and implementation of foreign policy especially in the first five years after South Africa's democratic elections, there have been notable successes which must be highlighted here:

- South Africa's participation in the conceptualisation and subsequent commitment to the implementation of NEPAD, a socio-economic programme

12 See also N. Mandela, Statement at the Official Opening of SADC Summit. www.policy.org.za/gov/docs/speeches/1997/sp908.html/1997. See also R. Suttner, "South African Foreign Policy and the Promotion of the Human Rights", in FGD, Through a Glass Darkly, Human Rights Promotion in South Africa's Foreign Policy (Occasional Paper No.6, 1996).

“anchored on the determination of Africans to extricate themselves and the continent from the malaise of underdevelopment and exclusion in a globalizing world” (NEPAD founding document, Abuja, Nigeria, 2001:3).

- Chairing the Non-aligned Movement from 1998 to 2001.
- Chairing the Commonwealth of Nations from 2000 to 2001.
- Chairing the Organisation of Africa Unity in 2002 and hosting the inaugural summit of the African Union, Durban, 9-10 July 2002.
- Hosting the United Nations World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerances, Durban, 31 August to 7 September 2001.
- Hosting the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, 2002.
- Promoting peace and stability in countries such as Sierra Leone, Ethiopia/Eritrea, Sudan, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Cote d'Ivoire and Burundi.
- Peace-keeping and peace-making missions such as in Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.
- Promoting the interests of developing countries with regard to poverty reduction, debt relief and the democratisation of international relations in high-level interaction with developed countries through its work at the G-20 of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), discussions with the Group of Eight Industrialised Countries (G-8) at their summits, and initiatives at other UN Fora, Non-Aligned Movement, G77, Mercosur, Indian Ocean Rim-Association for Regional Cooperation.

<http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/policy/foreign.html>

- Participation in the Commonwealth Troika (with President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria and Commonwealth Secretary-General, Don McKinnon) and SADC Troika (with Botswana and Mozambique) to work with the government of Zimbabwe on the economic and political issues affecting Zimbabwe. It is significant to note here that at the time of writing, President Mbeki was embarking on a fresh mission (together with Presidents Obasanjo and Bakili Muluzi of Malawi) to Zimbabwe. However, that mission “hit a sticky patch, preventing the resumption of inter-party dialogue in that country.”¹³

It is imperative here to underline South Africa’s leadership role in some of these success stories.

It should also be pointed out that South Africa maintains cordial and diplomatic relations with all states in SADC, Central, East Africa, West and North Africa (<http://www/anc>)

3. **SOUTH AFRICA’S LEADERSHIP ROLE IN AFRICA’S SUCCESS STORIES**

New Partnership for African Development

It is incontrovertible that the conceptualisation and articulation of the idea of the African Renaissance marks South Africa’s most successful effort at providing leadership on the African continent. There is no doubt that President Thabo Mbeki is one of the principal architects and chief exponents of NEPAD, the new leitmotiv for Africa’s economic regeneration, continuing underdevelopment and global marginalisation. Together with Presidents Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria, Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal, Abdel Aziz Bouteflika of Algeria and Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, Mbeki has played the leading role in conceptualising and harmonising the various ideas such as the Millennium Partnership for the African Recovery Programme (MAP); New African Initiative, the Omega Plan, New Compact with Africa, to come up with a coherent socio-economic programme.¹⁴ As the founding

13 AFP, “Zim Talks Hit Sticky Patch”, The Citizen, Tuesday, 6 May 2003.

14 Abuja Declaration 26 October 2001, NEPAD Founding Document, Abuja, Nigeria. 26

document points out, NEPAD is a pledge by African leaders, based on a common vision and a firm and shared conviction, that they have a pressing duty to eradicate poverty and to place their countries, both individually and collectively, on a path of sustainable growth and development and at the same time to participate actively in the world economy and body politic.¹⁵

NEPAD represents a new and refreshing approach, in its emphasis on Africa's responsibility for its own development and its advocacy of peer review as a monitoring mechanism; in determining priorities, identifying specific actions to be undertaken and establishing benchmarks and mechanisms for monitoring progress. Apart from providing the basis of a new partnership among African countries as well as between Africa and its development partners, NEPAD also provides the foundation stones for conflict management by emphasising the importance of good governance, the rule of law, human rights and democracy and of holding countries accountable for their actions.¹⁶

The NEPAD Declaration issued by the OAU Summit of Heads of State and Governments, on 11 July 2001 in Lusaka, Zambia, is the principal agenda for development, providing a holistic, comprehensive and integrated strategic

October 2001.

15 Abuja Declaration 26 October 2001, NEPAD Founding Document, ibid, paragraph 1.

16 Abuja Declaration, NEPAD Founding Document, ibid, paragraph 79.

framework for the socio-economic development of the continent, within the institutional framework of the African Union.

This adoption of NEPAD is considered as one of the most important developments of recent times for its conception of a development programme, placing Africa at the apex of the global agenda by:

- creating an instrument for advancing people-centred and sustainable development in Africa based on democratic value;
- being premised on the recognition that Africa has an abundance of natural resources and people who have the capacity to be agents for change and so holds the key to her own development; and providing the Common African Platform from which to engage the rest of the international community in a dynamic partnership that holds real prospects for creating a better life for all.¹⁷

Not only has President Mbeki been instrumental in the conceptualisation and elaboration of NEPAD, but he has been at the forefront of selling the idea to the developed countries of the North at their G-8 meetings and through the Bretton Woods Institutions. The principal challenge now is how to translate NEPAD from the realm of ideas into concrete programmes of achievement. President Obasanjo himself has pointed out that substantial progress has been made in many areas as the leaders continue to sharpen their focus on implementation strategies to finance specific projects in such areas as peace and stability, infrastructure development, agriculture, water and sewage reticulation and market access. Obasanjo has pointed to the peace efforts in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, and Sudan and to the help extended to Zimbabwe to address its economic and political turmoil as some of the dividends realised through NEPAD since its inception.¹⁸ We will return to some of these initiatives hereunder. But in order to round up President Mbeki's vision and leadership in tracing out the

17 Abuja Declaration, NEPAD Founding Document, Ibid.

18 The Citizen, 10 March 2003; Southern Africa Development Bulletin, April 2003.

contours or the outward boundaries of the African Renaissance, it is instructive to refer to his welcoming remarks at the launch of the African Union in July 2002. In a pithy speech highlighting the challenges facing African leaders, President Mbeki pointed out that African leaders had a duty to radically change the structure and content of the continent's political, economic and social relations with the rest of the world, inter alia by:

- ceasing being merely exporters of raw materials and capital to the developed world;
- that African countries needed to take new steps towards the further political and economic integration of the continent and therefore its unity;
- that African people needed
 - a) democracy;
 - b) good governance, the eradication of corruption, human rights, peace and stability;
 - c) eradication of poverty and attendance to such questions as food security, health, education, clean water, housing, gender equality, safety and security, and a healthy environment;
 - d) to end the situation according to which the African continent seemed condemned to the increasing impoverishment of its people, continuing underdevelopment and global marginalisation;
- that Africa has both the will and the capacity to take responsibility for its own renaissance;
- Africans must regain their human dignity and take their place among the peoples of the universe as equals occupying their rightful place within our

globalising village.¹⁹

4. **CONFLICT PREVENTION, MANAGEMENT AND RESOLUTION**

Apart from articulating and elucidating African Renaissance, South Africa's leadership can be seen in the successes of her role in conflict management in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in the Great Lakes region.

Burundi

President Nelson Mandela took over from the late African Statesman, Mwalimu Julius Nyerere as facilitator of the peace process. Although the Burundi situation was complex and intricate, owing to many years of mistrust and animosity, Mandela brought his towering moral authority to encourage and persuade the parties to a negotiated settlement. South Africa's Deputy President, Jacob Zuma, also acted as facilitator and negotiator. The Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi, signed in Arusha on 28 August 2000, was the culmination of these tireless efforts. Since then, Deputy President Jacob Zuma had been actively involved in the negotiations between the Transitional Government of Burundi and the National Council for the Defence of Democracy.²⁰

Perhaps the climax of the Burundi peace process was witnessed on Wednesday, 30 April 2003, when the Tutsi leader, Pierre Buyoya, who has twice carried out military coups, handed over power peacefully to the Hutu leader, Domitien Ndayizeye. This symbolic and yet very important milestone in the troubled history of Burundi occurred under the terms of a three-year power sharing agreement inaugurated in 2001. Ndayizeye will rule until national elections are held at the end of the transitional arrangements. At the time of writing, Ndayizeye has reshuffled the government inherited from Buyoya in order to accommodate three rebel forces. The successful handover of power and the return of peace to Burundi under

19 Opening Address by President Thabo Mbeki to the 38th Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the OAU, 8 July 2002 (Webmaster updated on 09 July 2002).

20 Foreign Policy Perspective in a Democratic South Africa, Ibid, Note 4; Bongiwe Mlangeni, "Burundi is a symbol for the rest of the continent", Sunday Times, 4 May 2003, at p.18.

Mandela's watchful eye and tutelage is a potent symbol for the rest of the continent, that African leaders can find African solutions for African problems.²¹

Apart from the mediation efforts of President Mandela and Vice President Zuma, South Africa also maintains the South African Protection Service Detachment (SAPSD) in Burundi, a contingency force to oversee the implementation of the agreement and to protect returning rebel leaders. It is also a significant confidence building measure as well as a strong consolidation of the peace process.

However, it must be noted here that the rebels loyal to the Defence of Democracy or FDD have not yet signed the peace accord, thus fighting is still going on, in and around Bujumbura. All in all, a durable settlement is not yet in place.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Another flash point where South Africa has been playing a leadership role, with notable success, is the Democratic Republic of the Congo. That vast central African country has not known peace and stability since the departure of the Belgian colonial masters in 1960. Since the fall of long time dictator Mobutu Sese Seko and the assassination of his successor, Laurent Kabila, South Africa has been an active role player in the search for peace in that country.

South Africa took part in negotiating and drafting the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement and was present when the documentation was signed on 10 July 1999.

21 See also Mathatha Tsedu, "African Leaders must find African Solutions for African Problems." Sunday Times, 4 May 2003, at p.19.

South Africa also brokered a major ground-breaking peace agreement between the governments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda at the end of July 2002. This agreement paved the way for Rwandan troops to withdraw from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (mainly Eastern Congo), and for the disarming and repatriation of the IntraHamwe (local Rwandese militia) and ex-Rwandese Armed Forces soldiers.²²

South Africa has also been participating in the UN peace-keeping mission in the Congo-MONUC. But perhaps the most significant achievement is with the Inter-Congolese Dialogue. A lot of time and monetary resources have been invested by South Africa in bringing the various combatants and factions to Sun City in the North West Province. This Inter-Congolese Dialogue was started by South Africa and countries in the region and resulted in the signing of a historic agreement on 3 April 2003 by eighteen parties to the conflict. The conclusion of that agreement was a major milestone in the history of the Congo, a second chance or new beginning for the people of that country.²³

A transitional government is beginning to take shape and the former rebel movements have begun arriving in Kinshasa to take up their positions in the transitional government. Again, the South African government should take credit for its painstaking efforts by bringing together the government of President Joseph Kabila and the fractious rebel movements. South Africa's hosting and funding of the Inter-Congolese Dialogue has been hailed as a "fitting example of the cherished dream of African heads of state to seek African solutions for African problems" (M. Tsedu, 2003).²⁴

Although the signing of the peace treaty and the installation of a transitional government have been hailed as remarkable achievements in the history of that

22 Foreign Policy Perspective, Ibid, Note 4.

23 City Press, 30 March 2003; 4 May 2003; Sunday Times, 4 May 2003.

24 Sunday Times, 4 May 2003, at p.19.

country, the attainment of an enduring peace is not within the reach of the long-suffering Congolese. Within a few days of the signing of the peace settlement at Sun City, reports emerged of thousands of innocent civilians being massacred by Lendu and Hema ethnic militias in Bunia, North-Eastern DRC. In the Kivu region of Eastern DRC, pockets of civil strife are still evident.

The real question has been aptly posed by the Congolese journalist, Claude Kabemba: What can South Africa do to help stop the carnage? Kabemba has himself given two commendable responses. Firstly, South Africa must not lose track of what is going on in the DRC. It must help the Congolese leadership in the implementation of the resolutions of the Inter-Congolese Dialogue. Secondly, Kabemba posits that South Africa must continue to mobilize the international community to root out groups that are obstacles to peace by upgrading peace-keeping to peace-making. He makes the useful point that without the use of force peace will remain a distant dream not only in the DRC, but in other conflicts on the continent.²⁵

It is instructive to note here that South Africa is to send a year-long peace-keeping mission at a cost of R 819.6 million as part of the disarmament, demobilisation, re-integration, repatriation and settlement programme of the United Nations in the DRC. Although the United Nations will reimburse part of the money (R 200 million), the fact that the South African taxpayer is going to pay approximately R

600 million on peace-making in DRC is a clear testimony of the government's commitment to seeking an enduring settlement to the conflict in that country.²⁶

Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe's economic meltdown and the concomitant political turmoil offers a test case for African countries in finding African solutions for African problems. To

25 City Press, 25 may 2003.

26 Sunday Times, 22 June 2003; City Press, 22 June 2003; The Citizen, 23 June 2003.

some commentators, Zimbabwe, which faces European Union and United States of America sanctions for alleged political repression and human rights abuses, is a clear case of bad governance, contrary to Articles 3(g) and 4(m) of the Constitutive Act of the African Union and the pre-requisites or conditions for sustainable development as eloquently articulated in NEPAD (para 79). This failure by African governments to raise their voice against one of their own may be seen as giving tacit support and succour to an oppressive regime.²⁷

Zimbabwe is also an important neighbour of South Africa, and, until fairly recently, a very important trading partner of South Africa, perhaps the highest recipient of South African imports (Gelb, 2001). A collapse of that country will, therefore, have far-reaching consequences for South Africa itself (Gelb, 2001).

The situation in Zimbabwe has also far-reaching implications for the southern Africa region. States in the region are not only linked by shared political, economic and cultural histories, but also by shared challenges. The turmoil in Zimbabwe has also cost the region R 18 billion in the three years up to the end of 2002.²⁸

Apart from these direct costs, there are also cross-border spillovers or externalities which must be taken into account. These include serious immigration problems involving economic migrants in search of better economic opportunities, intolerance of foreigners and xenophobia, crime such as trafficking in stolen vehicles and transmissions of diseases (Gelb, 2001).

The response of the South African government to the crisis in Zimbabwe offers important lessons to students of diplomacy and international relations. The main thrust of policy has been to rely on multilateralism and networking so as to

27 Oupa Ngwenya, "Zimbabwe: Test Case for Good Governance", City Press, 24 March 2003. On imposition of sanctions by President Bush, The Citizen, 6 March 2003. Sunday Times, 9 March 2003.

28 City Press, 25 May 2003.

advance a common strategic objective, namely to assist the people of Zimbabwe in bringing about national reconciliation and laying the foundation or basis for economic reconstruction and development in that country.

As part of the Commonwealth of Nations, South Africa's policy on Zimbabwe is in line with the decisions made by the Commonwealth Chairpersons' Committee meeting held in March 2002 and specific aspects of the Commonwealth observer Group Report on the elections in that country.

Pursuant to that collective effort, President Mbeki and President Obasanjo of Nigeria were requested to promote a process of reconciliation between the two main political parties, ZANU-PF and the Movement for Democratic Change (the MDC). Diplomatic envoys representing South Africa and Nigeria managed to facilitate meetings between the two protagonists.

The latest in these diplomatic efforts was on Monday, 5 May 2003, when President Mbeki joined Presidents Obasanjo of Nigeria and Bakili Muluzi of Malawi on a mission to help re-start the dialogue between Zimbabweans. Although details of the outcome of the separate meetings held with the two parties were not available at the time of writing, the general understanding was that there were “sticking points” in the way of resuming inter-party dialogue. The press speculated that President Mugabe would only talk to the MDC if they recognized his legitimacy by dropping the court challenge to his victory in the disputed presidential elections of 2002.²⁹

It is also useful to note that South Africa also relies on the SADC Ministerial Group on Zimbabwe (with Botswana and Mozambique) to continue their work in the context of existing SADC decisions which, in many instances, coincide with those taken by the Commonwealth (see further:

<http://www.anc.org/za/ancdocs/policy/foreign.html> .

Finally, it is imperative to point out that the South African government has endured much criticism from the press, opposition, political parties (especially the Democratic Alliance) and individual commentators including the much revered Mrs. Helen Suzman, over what the press has euphemistically termed “softly softly approach”. These critics are, in essence, calling on South Africa to take a leadership role by going beyond the consultation and consensus-building or seeking pattern of engagement. While these criticisms may sound attractive, given the scale of the problem, it is difficult to conceive of a much more cogent, alternative approach, short of a unilateral invasion of a sovereign state. That would amount to a violation of the Charter of the United Nations and of the Constitutive Act of the African Union.

5. INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT

29 The Citizen, 6 May 2003, at pp.1-2.

South Africa as the leading economic powerhouse in SADC and with her well-developed and functioning communications infrastructure, is actively involved in expanding infrastructural links in the sub-region. This includes mutual assistance, joint planning and execution of projects as part of development cooperation within the framework of SADC. Notable projects here include the following:

- Greater Limpopo Transfrontier Park.
- Komati River Basin Development Project and Maguga Dam.
- Maputo Development Corridor.
- The Lubombo Spatial Development Initiative.
- The Beira and Nacala Corridors.
- The N4 Platinum Highway Project that was officially launched in February 2002, linking Maputo Harbour in Mozambique with Walvis Bay in Namibia.
- Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park.
- South African parastatals, such as Eskom and Transnet, are also active north of the Limpopo, assisting in rehabilitating infrastructure such as provisioning of rolling stock and management on concessionary terms of Zambia's railway network.³⁰

These transboundary initiatives form an important part of development cooperation through SADC as a Regional Economic Community. They are also a

practical implementation of NEPAD in the sub-region.³¹ For more details on South

30 Foreign Policy Perspective, op.cit., Note 4.

31 Foreign Policy Perspectives in a Democratic South Africa.
<http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/policy/foreign.html>; Van Niekerk, Ibid.

Africa's involvement in economic integration in the SADC region, see <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/policy/foreign.html>.

6. **POTENTIAL CHALLENGES AND CONFLICTS WITH OTHER CENTRES OF POWER**

The extent to which other “powerful” countries on the continent pose a threat to South Africa's hegemon or leadership role is not very clear. Certainly, within the southern African region, South Africa's dominancy in terms of levels of economic development, infrastructure and military might is unquestionable. In West Africa, Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation, is a power to contend with as seen by President Obasanjo's involvement in NEPAD and conflict management and resolution such as in Cote d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Zimbabwe. South Africa maintains bilateral relations with Nigeria as a matter of strategic importance, particularly in the light of the development and promotion of NEPAD as well as in the evolution of mechanisms around the African Union. At the international level, cooperation between South Africa and Nigeria focuses on bringing Africa into the mainstream of global political, social and economic developments. Therefore, Nigeria under President Obasanjo should be viewed as a strategic partner, not a competitor.

In the far north, President Mubarak of Egypt has been in power since the assassination of President Anwar el Sadat in 1981. He presides over what is a de facto one party state. As pointed out before, Mubarak was one of the prime movers of NEPAD. What is not clear is whether he will be a good salesperson of NEPAD to investors in the North who view Africa as a risky investment destination.

Nevertheless, Egypt is an important country in North Africa, providing an important bridge to the Middle East and the Arab World.

President Muamar Ghadafi of Libya was instrumental in the transformation of the Organisation of African Unity into the African Union. He hosted the 4th Extraordinary Summit of the OAU in his own home village of Sirte in September

1999. The purpose of the Extraordinary Summit was to amend the OAU Charter to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the OAU. The theme of the summit was “strengthening OAU capacity to enable it to meet the challenges of the new millennium.” This summit concluded on 9 September 1999 with the Sirte Declaration aimed at:

- Effectively addressing the new social, political and economic realities in Africa and the world;
- Fulfilling the people’s aspirations for greater unity in conforming with the objectives of the OAU Charter and the Abuja Treaty establishing the African Economic Community;
- Revitalising the continental organisation to play a more active role in addressing the needs of the people;
- Eliminating the scourge of conflicts;
- Meeting global challenges; and
- Harnessing the human and natural resources of the continent to improve living conditions.

To achieve these aims, the summit, inter alia, decided to establish an African Union. But the establishment of the African Union was declared on 2 March 2001 at a second Extraordinary Summit in Sirte.

Colonel Ghadafi was also widely credited with having bankrolled the Lomé Summit of 2000 at which the Constitutive Act of the African Union was adopted.

He also bailed out African countries which were in arrears with their subscriptions

to the OAU.³²

At the Lusaka Summit in July 2001 and Durban Summit 2002, Ghadafi also enjoyed the limelight. But this eccentric and mercurial leader also presides over a one party state, and Libya's record on good governance and respect for human rights, at least from the perspective of liberal traditions, is not very admirable.

The Senegalese President, Abdoulaye Wade, was also instrumental in the conceptualisation of NEPAD through his OMEGA plan. Senegal enjoys an unsullied record of peace, stability and democracy in West Africa. At least there have been three peaceful transfers of power. Because of his long involvement in opposition politics and his current standing as an elder "statesman" in West Africa, Wade projects an image of a perfect and reliable partner in finding African solutions to African problems.

In East Africa, President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda is largely respected in London and Washington. But he also presides over a de facto one party movement system of government. His country has been riven by incessant civil wars.

In Kenya, the government of President Mwai Kibaki came to power recently after many years of dictatorship and repression under the corrupt rule of Daniel arap Moi. That coalition government is yet to establish its credentials on the African continent.

In the horn of Africa, Ethiopia is one of the most ancient civilisations, if not the cradle of human civilisation. It has played an important role in African politics including in the birth of the Organisation of African Unity in 1963. Since then, Addis Ababa has played host to the OAU, now the AU.

32 36th Session of the OAU, Lomé, Togo, 11 July 2000.

Because of the civil war with neighbouring Eritrea, famine, drought and other facts associated with the country's relative underdevelopment, Ethiopia should not be seen as a potential rival to South Africa.

In the Southern Africa region, South Africa's entry into the Southern African Development Co-ordinating Conference, now SADC, meant that Zimbabwe, the regional power and second strongest economy after South Africa, had now to contend with the presence of an economically stronger "brother". In the years immediately following the attainment of independence from Britain in 1980, Zimbabwe made remarkable gains, especially in such areas as education and health and the living conditions of the black majority. Mugabe himself was universally respected as an intellectual, revolutionary leader and statesman in the mould of Africa's founding fathers.

Observers noted some distrust and apparent rivalry between South Africa and Zimbabwe for regional leadership. This rivalry reached its climax over the chairing of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security, formerly the Frontline States, whose chair Mugabe inherited from Kenneth Kaunda. Mugabe's refusal to relinquish the chair of this organ to the chair of SADC (Mandela in CASU) had some serious ramifications in the conflicts in Lesotho (1998) and DRC and also clouded relations between South Africa and other SADC member states. At the height of the exchanges, Mugabe is reported to have said: I won't have them treating me like a province of South Africa (Cilliers, 1999).

The SADC structure, adopted by the Heads of State and Government in March 2001, means that the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security has now a well defined structure and reporting lines which will allow SADC to play an enhanced role in regional conflict management as well as to engage in joint military exercises to safeguard peace and security in the region (Ramsamy, 2002:6).

The Organ will be chaired on a rotational basis with a period of one year for each

chairperson. The Chair of the Organ will not simultaneously hold the Chair of SADC and will be accountable to the Chair of SADC and the Summit. The Organ will also function on a Troika basis.

As pointed out elsewhere, owing to the economic and political instability in Zimbabwe, that country is no longer a rival to regional leadership. In any case, relations in the SADC region should be based on principles of mutual benefit and interdependence, not hegemonic ambitions (D van Niekerk, 2001:236).

All in all, it would seem to us that most governments competing for leadership roles on the African continent have some credibility problems. On the other hand, almost ten years after the miraculous transition from a pariah state to a non-racial, non-sexist constitutional democracy, South Africa has recorded remarkable progress in promoting peace, stability, socio-economic growth and development, not only at home but across the breadth and length of the African continent.

7. REACTION OF OTHER AFRICAN COUNTRIES TO SOUTH AFRICA'S PRESUMPTIVE LEADERSHIP ROLE

As pointed out earlier, writers on South Africa's foreign policy have contended that it is almost impossible to overstate South Africa's leadership role on the African continent (Ahwireng-Obeng and McGowan, 1998; Marais, 1998; Cilliers, 1999; Schoeman, 2000; Gelb, 2001; and Hlatshwayo, 2002). These writers have advanced various reasons for this dominant position in terms of preponderance of economic, communications, trade, transport, population and military factors.

It is also useful to note there are discernible reactions to this leadership role. Because of constraint of space, we can only highlight them hereunder:

- Animosity over South Africa's economic dominance, especially in the SADC region, has led to the destruction of local manufacturing industries as a result of cheap imports of manufactured goods from South Africa. As Hlatshwayo has rightly pointed out, "the investment of South African capital in the region is

not driven by the need to ensure access to basic needs but rather an indication of the need to participate in the ‘race to the bottom’” (2002:37).

- South Africa’s claims to “exceptionalism” has, in the period 1994 to 1998, led to what Marais (1998) calls “an inflated sense of its authority and influence in foreign relations at a time when South Africa was perceived as not “understanding Africa”” (Cilliers, 1999:3).
- South Africa’s liberal democratic values, emphasizing good governance and human rights, and the preaching of “first world standards” to African leaders, as was the case with President Mandela’s outspoken criticism of the Nigerian military junta over the execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other Ogoni activists in 1995, led to perceptions, however misplaced, that South Africa was a lackey or pointsman for western interests (Marais, 1998; Cilliers, 1999; Schoeman, 2000:10).
- South Africa’s intervention in Lesotho, Operation Boleas, regardless of the fact that it formed part of a so-called SADC operation, was deeply and bitterly condemned and resisted in certain circles in Lesotho.
- Western countries and the donor community may have expectations of South Africa as a regional peace-keeper and may want to make it responsible for peace and security in its backyard, but that does not necessarily give South Africa authority, capacity and inclination to do so, or that its leadership would generally be welcomed or accepted (Schoeman, 2000:10).

All in all, in exercising its presumptive leadership role, South Africa needs to be over-cautious, ever-sensitive to possible accusations of domination or hegemony. The adoption of NEPAD, premised on African ownership and control of the continent’s destiny, with African leaders accepting that they will play their part in ending poverty and bringing about sustainable developments, has brought in a new paradigm that can serve to motivate and provide a frame of reference for the interrogation of issues of good governance, corruption and democracy in a manner

that does not directly threaten African leaders of long standing (Cilliers, 1999).

Under NEPAD, there will be a convergence of values and interests. South Africa will have much to offer to the rest of Africa and the rest of the continent will have much to offer to South Africa. Politically, the future of South Africa will be intimately linked to the future of Africa as a whole. Economically, South Africa's integration with the SADC region and wider continent will not be at the expense of industrial development in, or trade between other countries of the region and continent (Cilliers, 1999; Gelb, 2001; Hlatshwayo, 2002; van Niekerk, 2001).

8. THE GLOBAL FRAMEWORK OF FOREIGN POLICY

The dawn of the twenty-first century has brought with it unprecedented changes in the way human beings are organizing production, consumption, and other aspects of social relations. This compression of the time - space aspect of social relations, allowing the economy, politics, culture and ideology of one country to penetrate another is called globalization.

This rapid inter-penetration of social relations, involving world factories, labour flows, lending facilities, communications, new knowledge and information technologies and new cultural norms, is spearheaded by a few hundred industrial and financial corporations with the technological means and strategic vision on a global scale.

Globalization is also an outcome of macro-economic policies, designed on the basis of market-oriented criteria and financial concerns to make the world safe for transnational corporations.

It is not within the scope of this paper to debate the merits and demerits of globalization. Suffice it to point out that globalization is an all embracing concept with many meanings, which give rise to as many misunderstandings regarding its positive or negative effects. The negative effects are related to the primacy of capital which enjoys near perfect mobility over labour, which is much less mobile,

to the intensification of worldwide competition, to the demands of competitiveness, to the mass production of increasingly cheap products and to unacceptable working conditions in some regions of the developing world - the so-called race to the bottom.

One of the impacts of globalization has been on the role of the state in national development. The state no longer primarily acts as a buffer against the world economy, but plays an integral role in facilitating the movement of capital across national borders, leading to a disconnect between macro-economic policy and social development objectives, which in turn, leads to a situation where social, human development concerns take a back seat to financial concerns.

In the context of South Africa's foreign policy development and implementation, it is important to recall the perceptions contained in the 1997 ANC Discussion Document. In that document, the authors observe that globalization is at the heart of international relations and undermines (the) national sovereignty of countries, even more so in the developing world. It is realized that globalization is a contradictory, two-sided process: while it offers opportunities for growth, its overall impact is extremely uneven both within and between nations.

Gelb (2001) points out that globalization places particular pressures on national states, which most African states are ill-equipped to address, resulting in cross-border spillovers or externalities which affect South Africa negatively such as inward flows of refugees in search of survival, illegal immigrants in search of employment, and transmission in both directions of disease and criminal activities (especially narcotics and stolen motor vehicles).

The weakening of the African states and poor political and economic governance in African countries creates what Gelb refers to as the "African dummy" or bad neighbourhood. He points out that poor governance, both political and economic, creates negative perceptions for investors, foreign and domestic, portfolio and direct - which directly affects investment levels throughout the region (Gelb, 2001:23).

As part of the African continent, South Africa's growth and investment performance is affected by the African dummy, whereas improved governance in other African states can help alleviate some of the social spillovers which affect South Africa.

Gelb concludes that in the context of globalization and the cross-border spillovers and externalities which are associated with it, South Africa's key national interest in Africa lies in promoting improved governance as a basis for development, that is, strengthening the state. This will not only advance the interests of specific groups within South Africa which participate in economic relations with other parts of Africa, but also serve the objectives of broader South African society, in mitigating a major obstacle to investment and growth in the economy, and in promoting South Africa's role in international affairs (Gelb, 2001:27-28).

The other important factor which may have an impact on South Africa's ability to project its power and leadership role in regional and global affairs is the emerging tendency by two of the western powers, United States of America and the United Kingdom, to break away from multilateralism in favour of unilateralism. President Bush has broken radically with the bipartisan tradition of liberal internationalism, shared by both his father and Bill Clinton. Even before 9-11, he was repudiating treaties, ignoring the United Nations and sidelining NATO allies. This America "firstism" has come to mean that the USA should maintain its overwhelming global power and sway in international relations, even if that means down-grading old alliances and considering pre-emptive wars as witnessed by the Anglo-American invasion of Iraq in March 2003.

This US unilateralism means that developing countries such as South Africa have very little scope for action and manoeuvrability on the world stage.

9. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This paper has been concerned with South Africa's putative or presumptive leadership role on the African continent in the first ten years since her transition to a constitutional democracy in 1994. It set out to unpack the contours of South

Africa's foreign policy as an essential basis or foundation of its leadership role. In this respect, the paper proceeded from the understanding that South Africa and the ANC-led government was thrust into a leadership role almost from the very moment it took its rightful place in the family of civilised nations.

The paper then brings out the critical outcomes of this leadership role, viz South Africa being at the forefront in articulating and directing the trajectory of African affairs in such diverse areas as socio-economic development through NEPAD, peace, stability and conflict management and resolution. Success stories here include the establishment of transitional governments in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi.

It must be emphasized that NEPAD is not the first continental plan for Africa's development. It is relatively unknown to the average African in the streets of Orlando West in South Africa, Kalingalinga in Zambia, Citadel in Cairo, or Oujda in Morocco. Sub-Saharan Africa is still the part of the globe with the highest proportion of person living on less than US \$ 1 a day, caught in vicious circle or poverty trap where several factors combine and reinforce each other, for example, absence of demographic transition, epidemics including malaria, tuberculosis and the HIV and AIDS pandemic. The success of NEPAD will depend in large part on the extent to which it meets the basic, survival needs of the African people in very concrete terms. It should not be a mere talking shop or exclusive club of African heads of state and government. NEPAD needs strong foundations at the level of individual countries which will require governments to enter into partnerships with civil society. NEPAD can only be owned by the people if it addresses their basic needs and delivers concrete results.³³

33 Security and the NEPAD, Summary Report, Maputo, Mozambique, 22-23 January, 2002; see also "Conflict Prevention in Africa", speech by Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah, Executive Secretary of the Global Coalition for Africa, Japanese Institute of International Affairs, International Conference on Conflict Prevention. Tokyo, Japan, 12-13 June 2000.

In terms of promoting peace, stability, good governance, rule of law, human rights and democracy, the success of the African Peer Review Mechanism will depend, to a large extent, on the degree to which peer pressure, as in the case of Zimbabwe, can be brought to bear on fellow leaders who fall short of the benchmarks set in NEPAD and the Constitutive Act of the African Union. Will they be excluded from the benefits of NEPAD and membership of the African Union? In this respect, it is instructive to note the wise words of Gelb when he observes that South Africa is able to assume a leadership role in Africa which does not require it either to act as pure hegemon, on the basis of self-interest alone, nor to be “unbearably preachy” in making purely moral appeals. Gelb makes the salutary point that South Africa’s leadership can focus on enabling collective action and achieving common goals. “Such leadership will require both criticism, as voiced by former President Mandela, as well as support and encouragement, as provided in the peace negotiations and reconstruction efforts” in Rwanda, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In these situations, South Africa is playing an important role in keeping hostile factions inside the process as well as in providing credibility and assurance to donors from the “North” wishing to assist the process with financial resources (Gelb, 2001).

10. **AGENDA FOR THE FUTURE**

- The developmental challenges facing Africa are so formidable that they defy textbook solutions. The richest countries of the world have promised to help developing countries, including the African continent, halve poverty, reduce child mortality by two thirds and ensure every child gets free and good quality primary education by 2015. Rich and poor country governments at numerous international conferences have promised to tackle the debt crisis, to improve the living conditions of the poorest, and to protect the planet earth from climatic change, deforestation and species extinction. Yet there remains a huge gap between promises and concrete action. South Africa as one of the strongest economies on the continent and chief exponent and principal architect of NEPAD has to be in the forefront of collective efforts by weak African states to

address the developmental challenges besetting Africa.

- NEPAD and the African Union should not end up as “clubs” for African Heads of State and Governments but as coherent mechanism for the mobilisation of the people of Africa to take their destiny into their own hands. In other words, the challenge for the African leaders is to translate NEPAD into a mass-based framework that will involve business, women, the youth, workers, the media, the intelligentsia, the church, civil society and indeed all Africans in addressing the developmental challenges facing the continent.
- Through NEPAD and the African Union, South Africa with her strong commitment to constitutionalism, democracy, rule of law and respect for human rights, should be at the forefront of addressing the “bad boy image” or the “African dummy” of a continent associated with civil wars, genocide, famine, corruption, military coups etc. so that governance issues (political and economic) are seen as pre-conditions for development.
- Finally, South Africa is a relatively small country in global terms, an emerging middle power with serious developmental challenges of her own: unemployment and underemployment, backlogs in social service delivery especially as regards housing, portable water, sewage reticulation, education and primary health care. Therefore, the country’s leadership role and scope for action and manoeuvrability will, to a large extent, be dependent on the material conditions on the grounds. Thus, South Africa’s ability to project power on the continent such as in peace-keeping and peace-making missions in the DRC and the Great Lakes region and on humanitarian assistance as was the case with the floods in Mozambique in 2000, must be understood in the context of a regional partner not hegemon, but one working through multilateral and regional institutions in the search of solutions to common problems.

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