

**Speech by Minister Maite Nkoana-Mashabane  
to the South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA) on the topic  
'The relationship between South Africa and the Emerging Global Powers'**

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*Programme Director,  
Chairperson of SAIIA Council  
National Director of SAIIA  
Excellencies Ambassadors and High Commissioners  
Business leaders  
Staff and Students of the University of the Witwatersrand  
Senior Management of DIRCO and staff  
Ladies and gentlemen:*

When the Administration of President Jacob Zuma changed our name from the Department of Foreign Affairs to the Department of International Relations and Cooperation, we did so to affirm a better understanding of ourselves – what we are about and what we do – and the complex character of the world we live in today.

This understanding of ourselves has its foundation in the call contained in the Freedom Charter that 'There Shall be Peace and Friendship'; and that 'South Africa shall be a fully independent state which respects the rights and sovereignty of all nations; [and] ... shall strive to maintain world peace and the settlement of all international disputes by negotiation – not war'.

We are indeed about peace and friendship. We are about collaboration, cooperation and building partnerships; not confrontation and thriving in competition or rivalry.

This is what informs not only our approach to the world, but also to opportunities provided to us and the world by the rise of countries we call the 'emerging powers'.

I must therefore thank SAIIA for inviting us to give our perspective on South Africa's relations with these emerging powers. We take note of the work you do as SAIIA and appreciate the amount of resources and sheer labour that goes into all your research and the many articles and books you produce. We thank you for helping us do our work smarter and being a dependable ally!

**Programme Director**

The world we live in today has changed significantly since the end of the Cold War. A new group of economically influential countries such as Brazil, Russia, India and China are on the ascendancy, and are re-mapping the contours of political and economic power in the global system.

We are at the brink of a world envisaged in the Freedom Charter. We are far more aware today of the importance of global interdependence than any time in history. And it is evident that

forging fruitful partnerships and a stronger global governance template requires cooperation between the developed and developing countries.

In his work, *The Evolution of Cooperation*, Robert Axelrod reminds us that, 'friendship is hardly necessary for cooperation... Under suitable circumstances, cooperation can develop even between antagonists'. In this complex and fluid global system we live in today, nurturing conditions for cooperation is crucial if we are to construct a different global order where power is more diffused and responsibilities are appropriately shared.

History is replete with lessons of the dangers that failure to cooperate can generate, and with implications for future generations. We will obviously not want to repeat these mistakes. More will need to be done to turn the dream of a safe and better world into a reality, where developing countries have a greater say in decision-making.

In the past, the images of power and the pillars of international relations were largely constructed according to a narrow and one-sided template. Despite their shared ideological outlook, our partners of the North were by and large inward-looking, viewed at each other as competitors, and failed to grasp new opportunities to provide enlightened leadership that would create new foundations of global governance. They still viewed the world and economic relations very much in adversarial terms and as a zero-sum game.

Also, new challenges related to climate change, energy security, and those to do with coordination of trade and finance have become more salient today than ever. The reality of interdependence is a reality in the global system today. We have shared concerns and aspirations. Overcoming these challenges and achieving a safer and better world requires concerted efforts by both the developed and the developing world.

The simple lesson to draw from recent history as we come to terms with the geopolitical shifts expressed in the rise of emerging powers is that astute management of global interdependence and deepening of cooperation is essential for a strong and stable global governance mechanism. Emerging powers are an important force in shaping the coordinates of a better global system, characterised by greater representation, fairness and equity.

Failure to cooperate can generate outcomes that have far-reaching implications for the future than those experienced by the advanced industrial countries in the early to mid-1990s. It is abundantly clear that no country can sustain global governance on its own. Not even a small group of like-minded countries can effectively address the complex cross-border challenges that confront us today.

Similarly, the apocalyptic image of the world that was painted by Samuel Huntington in his book, *The Clash of Civilisations*, where he suggested that fragmentation along civilisational lines could animate the forces of disintegration and conflict post-Cold War era, has not happened. The force of cooperation trumps the tendencies of disintegration in the global society.

Difference does not have to lead to disintegration and conflict. Cooperation is possible among friends and antagonists alike. As we become acutely conscious of our shared challenges and

opportunities that lie ahead of us, the more prone we will be to strengthen the bonds of interdependence and cooperation.

### **Ladies and gentlemen**

The rise of emerging powers has helped to increase a sense of optimism amongst developing countries. Opportunities that were previously not existing to influence the evolving global system have opened up for developing countries as a result of the geopolitical shifts occasioned by the rise of emerging powers.

There is general agreement among students and practitioners of international relations that a dramatic global realignment appears to be in progress and quickening. The three emerging third world powers of Brazil, India and China plus Russia, are forming new alliances with nations extending from Asia and Africa and Latin America.

The Big Four, as the BRIC have come to be known, is a powerful economic alliance of the four fast-growing nations, two of which have the biggest populations of any country on earth. This group is battling to give greater recognition to the developing giants.

On another front, is the progressive trend that has taken sway of the direction of many governments in Latin America which has posed serious challenge to the dominance of the neo-liberal development model and how natural resources of the South have hitherto been exploited to the detriment of our countries and people. This phenomenon, together with the increasing geo-political weight of emerging powers of the South, is shaking the balance of forces in international affairs.

As South Africa, we should remember that some of the countries that we characterise as emerging powers have been our fellow travelers as Africans in the struggle against colonialism. We have over the decades forged strong ties of solidarity and partnerships with these countries, with a view to promoting development and reconfiguring the structures of power in international relations in favour of developing countries.

The seeds of South-South cooperation were laid in the 1955 Bandung Conference, when African and Asian nations cemented political and cultural ties. The creation of the Non-Aligned Movement in 1961 and the UNCTAD G77 in 1964 was birthed out of this partnership and shared objective about a different global template that is more sensitive to the interests of developing countries. Subsequently, various other initiatives were multiplied from this progressive impulse.

This is an important history to draw upon. As the South African government, we are also aware that history has marched on. The age of globalisation requires us to elevate these partnerships to a different level, building on the wells of goodwill and solidarity, and generate mutually beneficial economic relations. The shared historical ties make it much easier to share lessons about pursuing development paths. Building economic ties with these countries become all the more easier, because there is an understanding of the kind of challenges that we face as developing countries.

We share similar perspectives about the reform of global governance, in particular the imperative for enhanced representation and voice of developing countries in decision-making processes.

Significantly, we share a common view that multilateralism and rules-based global governance mechanism is the best guarantor of stability, and provides a better framework for asserting our values and interests.

We also share the desire to augment our agenda-setting capabilities so that we can engage effectively in multilateral processes, while also defending our policy space and flexibility given the massive development responsibilities our countries carry.

When we presented the budget vote in the National Assembly on the 22 April 2010, we underscored the need to intensify our bilateral relations with countries of the South, especially with those that are strategic to us because of their economy, history and geopolitical orientation.

Our approach to intensifying our relations with emerging powers and other countries of the South is, of course, through active and strong bilateral engagement. In addition, however, we also see the NAM and the G77 as important for South-South interaction, especially within the framework of the United Nations.

At another level, we see the formation of the IBSA and our membership of that body as a mechanism not only for enhancing our trilateral partnership with India and Brazil, but also as an important pillar for strengthening the muscle of the South in global affairs.

We believe that the IBSA will get a better balance, and become even stronger, if South Africa could become a member of the BRIC. We remain convinced that South Africa's diversified foreign policy objectives and interests allow for both groupings (IBSA and BRIC) to co-exist. It is our belief that the mandates of BRIC and IBSA are highly complementary.

IBSA, together with its partners, was also hailed at UNGA65 as an exceptional developmental initiative through its Hunger and Poverty Alleviation Facility, known as the IBSA Trust Fund. This Trust Fund was indeed honoured, during UNGA65, with the prestigious MDG Award for its various innovative and successful projects in countries such as Haiti, Guinea Bissau, Cape Verde, Burundi, Palestine and Cambodia. This type of cooperation was recognised as "a breakthrough model of South-South technical cooperation".

Furthermore, it is worth noting that on 14 April 2010, business representatives from the IBSA and BRIC member countries held meetings under four subject panels – energy, information technology, infrastructure and agribusiness – in order to discuss these issues and identify trade and investment opportunities between our countries.

We believe that IBSA and indeed the BRIC are best placed to serve as models for development cooperation in a South-South context.

We also note that the Copenhagen Accord was made possible due to in part, by the efforts of BASIC countries. We therefore look forward to the Cancun Conference to advance our goals under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

*Ladies and gentlemen*

In the recent past, we have been intensifying our diplomatic relations with China, India and Brazil (among others). We have recently elevated our relations with China to a comprehensive strategic partnership level, for example.

The State Visits undertaken to these countries in the past twelve months or so have helped in deepening our relations. Our business sector has been part of these delegations, signifying the importance of trade and investment in diplomatic relations in the 21st Century.

This is significant especially as it holds prospects for attracting investments in our economy, contributing to the growth of our exports, and creating conditions for employment creation. This is in line with one of our commitments to cast our foreign policy in the mould of our domestic development priorities.

We believe South Africa should embrace all available opportunities to establish partnerships and alliances, which have proven dependable during global negotiations dealing with issues such as world trade, economy and finance. It is our conviction that alliances are important and the more we have as a country, the better – especially at an economic level.

As a country, South Africa supports partnerships that have a potential of ensuring there is dynamic growth and development for us in a regional context, and not stagnation;

Emerging powers offer possibilities for South Africa and other African countries an important avenue for trade and investment linkages, technology transfers, and technical cooperation on a range of sectors.

In terms of the numbers, BRIC-Africa trade has increased nearly eightfold between 2000 and 2008; and BRIC's share of African trade increased from 4,6% in 1993 to almost 20% in 2008. Today, China, India and Brazil rank as Africa's 2nd, 6th and 10th largest trading partners respectively.

Many economists have even gone to the extent of suggesting that the BRICs, combined together, have moved Africa from the periphery of the global economy into a wider and inclusive centre. They argue that BRIC economies have supplemented Africa's economic growth trajectory.

### **Programme Director**

In the past decade the winds of change have swept across the African continent. Africa is a lot more stable than it was in the 1980s and early 1990s. Political instability has abated. In the 1980s there were only four democracies, and parts of the continent took on an image of a war

zone. Many countries had written off the African continent as a lost cause with little hope that it could ever rise from the ashes.

In the late 1990s this picture had begun to change. Many processes that Africans themselves initiated and owned contributed to this changing image. A number of countries in the continent took initiative to create political stability, and complementing this with macro- and micro-economic reforms. By early 2010, 30 African countries had acceded to the African Peer Review Mechanism.

South Africa has always regarded the African continent as the centerpiece of its foreign policy, and mobilising a significant amount of resources towards peace-building, post-conflict reconstruction, and through infrastructure development using the spatial development initiatives. South Africa continues to be heavily involved in various parts of the continent.

The recent wave of interest in the African continent, exhibited by emerging powers, can only be a welcome opportunity as it offers Africa an alternative platform to integrate into global economic relations.

A number of African countries have solidified relations with emerging powers at a bilateral level. Countries such as China and India have established a mechanism for working with African countries collectively and the African Union.

As a result of growing demand for its commodities, largely from Asia's emerging powers, and also as a reflection of gradual diversification of various economies in the continent, Africa registered an average growth of six percent in the period between 1995 and the onset of the global financial crisis in 2008.

A few days ago I received the Foreign Minister of Congo Brazzaville who shared with me one of the positive stories of his country that its economy is growing at two digits at this time when others are battling the recession.

South Africa is open to work with emerging powers and other players that have an interest in Africa's development towards advancing the African Agenda. The NEPAD programme provides a platform to widen partnerships on sustaining momentum for Africa's development.

But as Africa, we have to do more to join the ranks of emerging powers. Already, as a continent, we have the bit of ability to influence the behavior of other states. We also have the ability to influence, in whatever small way, the structural power balance at the international level. But this relational and structural power that we possess collectively, we must admit, is not at the level that can allow us to pursue our interests as we would have wanted. We are still the most challenged of the three continents that constitute the global South.

If Africa is to realize its full potential, I believe that there are critical and urgent interventions, in addition to steps already taken, we must make in four areas – all with capital I: that is: Infrastructure, Intra-trade, Industry and Integration.

Our work on infrastructure has to build on NEPAD initiatives in the areas of rail and road, ICT and connectivity, agriculture and food security, water and sanitation, and energy. South Africa is currently chair of the infrastructure sub-committee established by the African Union at its last summit at the initiative of President Zuma. This sub-committee is to lead our continent in the championing of five high-impact priority infrastructure projects to reinvigorate the work of NEPAD in this area.

Our success in implementing these infrastructure projects will enhance intra-trade among our countries, boost our industrialisation, and accelerate the integration of our continent for greater unity, building on our Regional Economic Communities. A united Africa will leverage its one billion people as a resource and market for the growth of our economies.

Indeed, interventions in infrastructure, intra-Africa trade promotion, accelerated industrialization of our countries, and for the deep integration of our continent – all have to go hand-in-hand with the investment in our people. Our people are our resource.

Our interventions in the four areas listed above (the four capital I) will enable our private sector and investment partners from outside our continent, to have more confidence in working with us to grow our economies – create decent work and conditions for a better life for our people.

We will also need to study closely examples coming out of Latin America on how best we can manage and leverage our national resources for the benefit of our countries and people.

South Africa will play its part to contribute to the rise of our continent as an emerging power. Some have referred to our country as what they call an ‘emerging market’. But we believe that our strength is in how we will marshal our collective muscle that will bring together countries such as Angola, Nigeria, Egypt, Algeria, Kenya and Uganda – into a formidable force. South Africa is only strong and indeed stronger when it is and behaves like an inseparable part of this continent.

I can only echo here what President Zuma said in his address to the South Africa-Egypt Business Forum during his State Visit to Egypt, that ‘We remain firm in the view that after Asia and Latin America, Africa is the next zone of economic growth and development’.

However, while deepening our relations with countries on our continent and emerging powers, South Africa will continue to strengthen the partnerships that we have with countries of the North. Our recent summit in Brussels to strengthen our strategic partnership framework with the European Union is but one example of this.

As the South African government we are intent on building relations with different countries in the world to realise the values and interests that we hold dearly: to create opportunities for our people, ensuring economic prosperity; and to work with other countries in strengthening multilateralism.

We will be going to the next G20 summit to be held in South Korea in the next few days to continue to call for greater voice and representation for our continent and other developing countries in the governance of the international system. We welcome steps announced recently

towards the reform of the Bretton Woods Institutions, but we believe more must still be done if these institutions are to be more democratic, transparent and accountable.

*Ladies and gentlemen*

Developing countries are indeed amplifying their voices and confidently defining the outlines of global governance in the 21st Century. They are increasingly seen as equal partners in shaping the ideas and processes that would give birth to new global governance mechanisms.

The rise of emerging powers such as Brazil, India and China offers a powerful demonstration effect for other developing countries. These countries could lend a significant weight in restructuring global governance mechanism, and amplifying the development interests of developing countries.

The growing space of influence by developing countries in structures of global governance is something to be welcomed. The rise of emerging powers is a development that reflects multiplicity of civilisations and political identities, and this should be regarded as a source of strength rather than weakness in international relations.

It should be seen as a critical element for forging deeper cooperation rather than a sign of the emergence of new rivalries. Diversity in global governance processes can empower decision-making, broaden our vision, enrich our normative concepts and language, and further enlighten our interests.

Recent research has shown that emerging economies contribute large share of global growth. There is further evidence borne out by research that other low and middle-income countries have registered positive growth as a result of integrating closely with emerging economies.

There is also a weight of expectation from the developed world, including the IMF, that emerging powers such as China and India will sustain global growth for many years to come. This will for the first time in 200 years that global growth is driven by emerging powers. This is expected to change the face of global commerce, with innovation, product designs and value chains driven by emerging powers. This newly found economic strength could potentially translate itself into enhanced political voice in global governance mechanism.

The reality of emerging powers is here to stay. The economic center of gravity is shifting to the South. This shift should not be regarded as a zero-sum game. It is an opportunity to be harnessed to strengthen collective global responsibility and achieve developmental gains for developing countries, and Africa in particular.

I must point out, however, that this current trend, which we view as positive from the perspective of the South, will not be without challenges. While some will view this trend as basis for building a strong and working multi-polar world, others may see it as a threat.

On the other hand, the emerging powers will also have the challenge to ensure that their dominance is for the general good of the South and the entire humanity.

As a country, the geopolitical shifts and the need to establish global governance on a firm foundation requires us to refocus our foreign policy tools as South Africa. This is the objective we have in mind with the White Paper process, the Foreign Policy Council we intend to establish, and the envisaged South African Development Partnership Agency.

The global system requires that we work on managing global interdependencies and strengthen cooperation in order to overcome common challenges related to development, climate change, energy security, and trade and finance.

SALIA, as a non-state actor, is an invaluable partner. We are pleased that you have been visibly active in our activities, including the consultation we organized recently on the Discussion Document on our White Paper.

We count on actions by organizations like yourselves to work together with us to realize the dream of a new Africa that Patrice Lumumba once spelt out in his Independence Day speech of June 1960. Lumumba's vision is as relevant today as it was fifty years ago when many of our African countries gained their independence: He said:

*The Republic of the Congo has been proclaimed, and our country is now in the hands of its own children.*

*Together, my brothers, my sisters, we are going to begin a new struggle, a sublime struggle, which will lead our country to peace, prosperity, and greatness.*

*Together, we are going to establish social justice and make sure everyone has just remuneration for his labor...*

*We are going to show the world what the black man can do when he works in freedom...*

*We are going to keep watch over the lands of our country so that they truly profit her children...*

*We are going to put an end to suppression of free thought and see to it that all our citizens enjoy to the full the fundamental liberties foreseen in the Declaration of the Rights of Man...*

*We are going to do away with all discrimination of every variety and assure for each and all the position to which human dignity, work, and dedication entitles him.*

*We are going to rule not by the peace of guns and bayonets but by a peace of the heart and the will..*

Working together we can do more to realize this dream!

We are about peace and friendship. We are about collaboration, cooperation and building partnerships; not confrontation, competition or rivalry.

I thank you!