

**Media remarks by H.E. Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Ms Maite Nkoana-Mashabane, Imbizo Media Centre, Parliament**

22 Jul 2014

Good morning ladies and gentlemen of the media.

Today we will be presenting the Budget Vote Speech of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation to Parliament.

In this briefing now, we are only giving you a short preview of the speech. We trust that you will follow the speech and familiarise yourselves with the details.

The speech will focus on our Programme of Action in the five years of this term of government, informed by the recent State of the National Address as presented by His Excellency President Jacob Zuma.

We will outline our role as the Department of International Relations and Cooperation in the pursuit of the objectives of the National Development Plan and how, with our international partners, "Together we (can) move South Africa Forward".

The budget vote speech will focus on the following areas, amongst others:

1. Our pursuit of the African Agenda, with specific emphasis on the African Union's vision document, Agenda 2063.
2. Our BRICS membership and its significance not only to us as a member state of BRICS, but also its significance to the rest of the developing South.
3. Our role within Southern African Development Community (SADC), focusing on regional integration mechanisms, including infrastructure connectivity.
4. We will outline our approach to South-South Cooperation as one of the pillars of our foreign policy. South Africa's freedom is a product of international solidarity, and 20 years later, we remain an integral part of the South, working with like-minded and friendly countries of the south to confront our common challenges and realise our common objectives.
5. We will also outline our approach to North-South relations, focussing on our relationship with developed countries on the North.
6. The Middle East remains a strategic region in the world, and recent developments there, in particular the conflict involving Israel and Palestine, is extremely worrying. We will make an announcement to Parliament on our approach to this conflict.

The budget vote speech will have more details on each of these issues that we just highlighted..

In the State of the Nation Address, President Jacob Zuma was unequivocal about what needs to be done to move South Africa forward in the next five years. The President said: "As we enter the second phase of our transition from apartheid to a national democratic society, we have to embark on radical socio-economic transformation to push back the triple challenges of inequality, poverty and unemployment. Change will not come about without some far-reaching interventions".

We invite you to join us in Parliament as we account to our people on how, through our foreign policy, we can realise the objectives of the National Development Plan and promote South Africa's national interests and priorities.

Thank you.

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