

MULTILATERALISM AND THE UN IN SOUTH AFRICA'S FOREIGN POLICY

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Introduction

The United Nations (UN) was established in Dumbarton Oaks, San Francisco, seventy-years ago with the promise of bringing peace to the world and to saving “successive generations from the scourge of war”. After as many years, the UN still reflects the world order of 1945, and remains out of touch with the global realities of the 21st century. South Africa, a country that was for almost a half a century at the receiving end of ostracist measures from the world body for its racist policies of apartheid, became a keen champion of the reform of the UN (Geldenhuis 1984). Indeed, no sooner was Jan Smuts a sponsor of the preamble of the UN Charter, than he found himself in the wharf for the racist policies of promulgated and upheld by himself and his government (Geldenhuis 1984). In an extraordinary turn of historical events, post-apartheid South Africa has made multilateralism a central tenet of her foreign policy, and has advanced this strategy under the banners of “transformation of global governance” during the Mbeki years and “active participation in the global system of governance” during the Zuma period. As a country located in the South, South Africa's new governments made bold efforts to sure her voice is heard, and her agency felt likewise.

In Defence of Multilateralism

South Africa became a proponent of multilateralism and multilateral diplomacy. This is important given that multilateralism presents a platform

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and space for developing countries to have a voice and agency. Kishan Rana has described multilateral diplomacy as “diplomacy via conferences attended by three or more states” (Rana 2004, 20). It is frequently but not always confined to thematic subjects, for example environmental degradation and global warming, arms control or international regimes and policy (Rana 2004). According to Vladimir Petrovsky, “multilateral diplomacy is often considered to be a type of superstructure over bi-lateral diplomacy. I think”. He goes on to assert: “these are two sides of the same coin and none excludes the other... Multilateral negotiations, despite their being time-consuming, are a very effective safeguard against hegemonic and similar tensions” (Petrovski 1998). In the post-Cold War era, multilateralism is characterised by more complex agendas of conferences and negotiations with larger numbers of issues and the growing involvement of experts, citizens groups and NGOs. Multilateral diplomacy is trying to adapt to the complex post-Cold war environment and conditions, but the changes are happening at a very slow pace (Petrovski 1998). There is in fact a need to revise the rules and procedures of multilateralism so as to become more effective.

All post-apartheid governments have supported multilateral diplomacy as a strategy and *modus operandi* behind diplomatic efforts. Carlsnaes and Nel reminded us that, “a central dimension of South Africa’s normative role has been its promotion of rules-based multilateralism as the appropriate institutional form for conducting international affairs in what Mandela called ‘an interdependent world’” (2006, 21). The authors go further to argue that the commitment to multilateralism has stood South Africa and its allies in good stead in developing combined and revitalised initiatives in world trade talks, developing joint initiatives for reforming global financial institutions, promoting global arms control and humanitarian measures, and strengthening emerging international criminal law institutions such as the International Criminal Court (Carlsnaes and Nel 2006). Pretoria believed that its peaceful transition and international credibility gave it “vote-pulling capacity and influence in multilateral fora” (Department of Foreign Affairs 1996, 16). It was committed to a policy of “multilateral diplomacy” and claimed that its “policies and practices and its consistent principled approach has endowed it with particular moral authority to champion the need for the democratisation, good governance and improved effectiveness of international, regional and sub-regional institutions” (Department of Foreign Affairs 2005, 20) In this context, the government has continuously emphasised “(...)its commitment to multilateralism, and in this context, to the pre-eminent role of the UN in global affairs” (Department of Foreign Affairs 2005, 20).

Multilateralism was not just an end in itself for South Africa; it was

a means to an end. It was viewed as an important international instrument to help solve global problems. In 2005, the Mbeki government was adamant that, “South Africa, in the conduct of its international affairs, acts in a manner that respects international law and promotes multilateralism as a means of seeking consensus in the affairs of the world” (Department of Foreign Affairs 2005, 5). When South Africa joined the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) for the first time in 2007, the then Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma opined: “we do so conscious and convinced that the multilateral system of global governance remains the only hope for challenges facing humanity today”². At least in terms of stated policy, the Jacob Zuma-led government continued with the position of its two predecessor governments. In February 2012, the Minister of International Relations and Co-operation, Maite Nkoana-Mashabane stated that “South Africa is committed to...reforming the multilateral institutions that make up the global system of governance” (DIRCO 2012). At the heart of the Republic’s multilateral strategies were efforts to advance the interests of Africa and the developing countries. Multilateral fora were regarded as platforms in which South Africa could enhance the voice and participation of Africans and countries from the South.

With multilateralism at the heart of its diplomacy since 1994, South Africa has long championed the idea that the UN and the UN Charter should be placed at the centre of world governance as it pursued the strategy of a transparent and rule-based international political and economic order. The Thabo Mbeki-led government (1999-2008) persistently punted “the importance of multilateralism and the urgent need to revitalise and reform the UN” (Department of Foreign Affairs 2005, 16).

In its March 2012 International Relations Policy Discussion Document, the ruling African National Congress (ANC) stated that the governing party “will continue to work with other progressive forces globally to promote global transformation towards multilateralism and against growing unilateralism”³. It was the view of the Zuma-led government that western powers, notably the US, Britain and France tend to use the UN, including the Security Council as instruments to serve their interests (Landsberg 2010, 242).

Setting the UN-South Africa Scene

² Quoted in DIRCO, IGD and SAIIA. *South Africa in the UN Security Council 2011-2012: A Report on the Government-Civil Society Strategy Dialogue*. Pretoria, November 2010.

³ African National Congress (ANC), International Relations, Policy Discussion Document, Johannesburg, March 2012.

South Africa's preferred strategy of multilateralism was to work through the UN and forums such as the G77+China, the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), the Africa Group within the UN, and other like-minded states, with the aim of upholding the sanctity of the UN Charter and observation of its rules, especially in dealing with conflicts. It has implemented UN Security Council (UNSC) resolutions on various issues, including peace-support operations and combating terrorism.

Since hosting the 2001 World Conference against Racism, it has focussed on establishing and operationalising the UN Human Rights Council as an agency with resources and authority to advance the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, promoting women's rights by campaigning at the UN for tangible action on the Beijing Declaration and Programme of Action.

Two other strategies towards the UN were, firstly, to elevate issues of development and poverty and move away from emphasis on "peace and security" as defined by the West; and, secondly, to challenge the dominance of the West in international relations and address inequities in the global political economy. On this score, South Africa's strategy was driven by a quest for both fairness and representation and a voice for the developing South. Giving a greater voice to countries from the developing South has indeed been a major *raison d'être* underscoring these multilateral moves.

The Mbeki government put the UN and its reform at the centre of its diplomacy. A 2005 foreign policy document asserted that "it is clear that it is only through a reformed UN that threats and challenges of the 21st century could be collectively confronted. For South Africa", the document continued, "multilateralism is not an option, but the only way that can bring about development and therefore durable peace" (Department of Foreign Affairs 2005, 7). That administration was of the critical view that "a unilateral approach to global problems has led to the erosion of the United Nations multilateralism, and the undermining of the international treaties and international law" (Department of Foreign Affairs 2005, 7).

South Africa also regarded itself as a voice and "spokesperson" for Africa within the UN and other multilateral agencies. In 2002 and 2003, for example, South Africa successfully campaigned for the UN General Assembly to endorse the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) to be adopted "as the policy framework around which the international community – including the UN system – should concentrate its efforts for Africa's development", and set up modalities for UN support to NEPAD⁴.

4 United Nations A/Res/57/2; A/Res/57/7; and A/Res/57/300; quoted in Landsberg

In an address at the University of Limpopo on 12 March 2012, the Deputy Minister of International Relations and Co-operation, Ebrahim Ebrahim made a link between UN reform and Africa's interests. The Deputy Minister reminded us that "the Security Council dedicates most of its time and energy to focusing on peace and security matters on the African continent. More than 70% of Security Council deliberations are centred around African conflict situations" (Ebrahim 2012). As a perceived "anchor state" in Africa, South Africa saw itself as a spokesperson of Africa, and felt duty-bound to make the case for African representation in UN agencies, including the UN Security Council.

Democratising the UN

South Africa has been active in the affairs of the UN General Assembly (UNGA), which it regarded as an ideal platform to help shape a progressive agenda sensitive to the needs of poor and marginalised countries, and has duly defended it as appropriate for broad political and economic engagement.

The Mandela government aspired to becoming a responsible global citizen in promoting the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and arms control, since when the role of exemplar in eradicating weapons of mass destruction has characterised foreign policy (Landsberg 2010). The post-apartheid Republic quickly acceded to the Convention on Inhumane Weapons of 1995, joined the Nuclear Suppliers Group, and provided information on its own weapons trade to the UN's Register of Conventional Weapons. It made substantive inputs into the Review and Extension Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1995, as it helped to shape the middle ground for a "New Agenda Coalition" between nuclear and non-nuclear blocs. Its role allowed for the indefinite extension of the treaty without a vote, and helped facilitate broad consensus by reminding both blocs of their obligations. Its role in the conference helped establish itself as an honest player in this complex terrain (Landsberg and Masiza 1996).

South Africa's role during the 1995 nuclear extension conference has long been hailed as one of its most important breakthroughs and roles in foreign policy and diplomacy. After 1999, the Thabo Mbeki government continued with this important theme in diplomacy. South Africa therefore refused to adopt a narrow view with regard to nuclear non-proliferation, and challenged the idea that it is only the so-called nuclear-have states that should have the right to embark on nuclear programmes. Non-nuclear weapons

states, or nuclear non-haves, policy held, should also have the right to develop civilian nuclear programmes. As a member of the Board of Governors of International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), South Africa actively tried to shape discussions pertaining to Nuclear issues. As far as the long standing controversy around Iran's nuclear programme was concerned, for example, South Africa's position was that a confrontational approach needed to be avoided at all costs, and an inclusive, comprehensive solution had to be sought. This commitment to non-confrontation and non-violence, and the peaceful resolution of disputes has been a key tenet of post-apartheid foreign policy. Pretoria-Tshwane was in favour of a balanced stance in favour of the rights both of Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) members to nuclear technology for peaceful purposes and the need to build international confidence and promote the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Instead of adopting a hard-line attitude vis-à-vis Iran or any other actor, policy was in favour a pro-negotiations stance, encouraging them to give up nuclear weapons programmes while supporting their position in favour of peaceful nuclear programmes.

In prioritizing the importance of multilateralism and the urgent need to revitalise and reform the UN, Pretoria-Tshwane was in a position to “(...) consistently [call] for more equitable representation of Africa and other developing regions and for the adoption of more just and transparent rules and procedures” (Department of Foreign Affairs 2005, 16). The idea of South Africa as the voice and spokesperson of the underdeveloped and destitute came through again.

Support for UN Human Rights Architecture

South Africa has contributed to the establishment and operationalisation of the UN Human Rights Council, the challenge being that UN institutions charged with advancing the Universal Declaration on Human Rights were haemorrhaging under pressure from the securitisation of the UN and human rights agenda by powerful states such as the US (Scanlon 2006). South Africa joined the G77+China campaigns for the replacement of the Commission for Human Rights with an effective, impartial and well-resourced body that would be a full subsidiary of the UNGA. This led to the establishment of the Human Rights Council by General Assembly Resolution GA 60/251. During the UN Millennium Plus 5 South Africa, together with other countries like Botswana and Mauritius encouraged UN members to support the adoption of the “responsibility to protect (R2P) concept” (Mwanasali 2006). Preceding that, as early as the year 2000, South Africa was instrumental in encouraging the African Union (AU) to adopt its own responsibility to protect regime,

called “from non-interference to non-indifference” (Landsberg 2010b, 438). Under the banner of this new doctrine, the continent would permit interference and intervention in the Affairs of African states so as to root out gross violations of human rights, genocide, instability within countries that may threaten broader regional stability in Africa, and unconstitutional changes of government (Akokpari and Zimbler 2008; Mwanasali 2006). Whilst supporting the R2P principle, South Africa was weary of this principle being used and abused by western powers for selfish foreign policy ends, and as a tool to settle scores with governments they had differences with. It was this kind of scepticism which led to the fall-out over the visit to South Africa of Sudanese president alBashir and the ANC ultimately imploring government to consider withdrawing from the ICC (Masters and Landsberg 2015).

Linking to the R2P debate, the Human Rights Council is responsible for observance of and respect for human rights globally, and is viewed by South Africa as having the primary responsibility for dealing with global human rights violations, not the UNSC - a view that informed their decision on the Myanmar affairs (Landsberg 2010b). Secondly, its decision was bolstered by the decision of ASEAN countries that Myanmar did not constitute a threat to their region and stressed that it would take its cue from sub-regional bodies on matters affecting member states. South Africa would not budge on a principled stance over matters tabled in the UNSC and vehemently resisted attempts by major powers in the council to place on the agenda matters that belonged in other chambers of the UN. In effect, South Africa disallowed the use of extraneous agendas as instruments to further their narrow self-interested foreign policy ambitions. But this strong stance came at a price, as it created the perception that South Africa was merely paying lip service to its commitment to uphold human rights. Its voting behaviour caused great consternation as many critics regarded it as inconsistent with its exemplary Constitution and foreign policy principles.

Pursuing UN Security Council Reform

The commitment to democratising the institutions of global governance, primarily the UN, found strong support from a resurgent global South in the UN and former Secretary General, Koffi Annan. The latter worked to develop consensus on the reform of the Security Council during his tenure and whose commissioned report of 2005 underlined the need of the UN to promote representation at decision-making levels and an equitable distribution of power within the UN system generally. The country that was once at the receiving end of sanctions and other punitive measures by the UN and

broader international community for pursuing apartheid and white minority domination, on account of what was dubbed a “crime against humanity” and a “threat to international peace and security”, is now a keen champion for the transformation of the world body. South Africa supported Annan’s position and a 2005 strategic foreign policy document reminds us that “South Africa actively participates in the debates on UN reform, particularly the reform of the UNSC, in order to make the UN more effective in dealing with new challenges as well as to make it more transparent, democratic and sensitive to the needs of Africa and the South” (Department of Foreign Affairs 2005, 21). Here again, it emerges that South Africa did not only see itself as a champion of multilateralism, but of the needs and interests of Africa.

The record demonstrates that South Africa contributed immensely to the evolution of this debate, thus helping to develop a common position as early as 2007, after three years of zealous consultation with African states. The Harare Declaration of that year informed the subsequent position on African representation in the Security Council, the so-called Ezulwini Consensus, which called on Africa to insist on two veto-wielding permanent and five non-permanent seats (Landsberg 2005). This position, however, failed to win support from the UN Summit in September 2005 and caused a stalemate in the reform process. South Africa’s failure to get Africa to move from its all-or-nothing position and build global coalitions will go down as a major strategic failure in its quest for democratising institutions of global governance. Former South African President, Thabo Mbeki, stated that “the UN, where the Security Council is dominated by five permanent members, need[s] to be reformed” (BBC News 2004). In 2014 and 2015, President Zuma used the occasion of his addresses to the UN General Assembly to openly canvass for the reform of the UN Security Council.

In February 2010, the AU Summit held in Addis Ababa endorsed South Africa’s candidature for the non-permanent seat on the UNSC for the period 2011-2012. The Minister of International Relations and Co-operation vowed that South Africa “would be guided by its commitment to strengthening the multilateral system and its support for a broader multilateral approach to questions of international peace and security” (The Diplomat 2010). She further noted that the country will “promote the African Agenda and...contribute to achieving peace and stability in the continent and in all regions of the world” (The Diplomat 2010). In February 2012, the Minister reiterated that

South Africa has been actively engaged in and supportive of all aspects of the reform process...However, more than ever, the world is in need of comprehensive reform of the UNSC which involves an expanded Council

in both the permanent and non-permanent categories, and with improved working methods. (DIRCO 2012)

In line with the Ezulwini consensus, South Africa sought to play the role of “voice” for the voiceless when the Minister asserted that, “in keeping with the principle of equitable representation, Africa, which makes up a considerable percentage of the overall membership of the UN, must be represented in the permanent category of the UNSC” (DIRCO 2012).

In that 2012 speech by the deputy Minister of International Relations and Co-operation mentioned earlier, reference was made to the fact that “(...) Africa is a huge continent that has 54 member states, representing more than one billion people” (Ebrahim 2012). Yet, complained deputy minister Ebrahim Ebrahim (2012), “(...) not a single African country is a permanent member of the UN Security Council”. President Zuma also weighed in on the debate during a Security Council Summit Debate on 12 January 2012. According to the President: “the failure of representation, on a permanent basis, of such a big part of the globe in an important body such as the UN security Council, points to the necessity and urgency for the fundamental reform of the UN Security Council so that it can become more representative and legitimate” (Ebrahim 2012).

South Africa in the Security Council

The first year of South Africa’s two-year tenure as a non-permanent member of the UNSC, January 2007 to December 2008, shows that despite the current global power imbalances, norm entrepreneurs (i.e., states that act in an exemplary and predictable manner in keeping with expectations about desirable behaviour) can make a limited but significant contribution to the cause of the UN and broader multilateralism. South Africa also had a second term as a non-permanent member in 2011-2012. Using the opportunity to contribute directly to the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security, it brought to the council a commitment to enhancing the integrity of the UN and its organs and placement of Africa and the global South at the centre of their agenda.

To be effective in the council, a member requires capacity to understand and handle the complex agenda and calculate how to respond to the disproportionate power of the Permanent Five (P5) - China, France, Russia, the UK and US - and their willingness to use this power to push through issues of self-interest. South Africa was concerned about the P5’s ability to arrogate to themselves the right to define threats to international peace and their re-

sponse. This produced tension between South Africa and some of them over what was considered abuse of power.

Siphamandla Zondi argued that “(...) South Africa needed coalition with like-minded members, and with six other non-permanent members who were also members of NAM (Congo Republic, Ghana, Indonesia, Panama, Peru and Qatar) it reconstituted the NAM Security Council caucus to develop unified positions on major issues before the council and protect the interests of the developing countries”⁵. Without the privilege of the veto powers, the united positions of these states have affected the outcomes of major decisions in the council. South Africa virtually acted as a spokesperson and champion of the group, and deftly used its position as the chairperson of the broader G77+China Group for 2007 drawing on its own moral authority, further to punt loudly for the reform of the UN and other multilateral bodies.

A Perspective on Voting Positions

South Africa's principled positions on Myanmar, Zimbabwe, Iran, Libya, Cote d'Ivoire and, currently, Syria, have been regarded by representatives as major successes in the UN chambers; but poor public diplomacy has led to criticism in the public arena. In recent times, it has also been difficult to reconcile the various positions of the country as it appeared contradictory in nature. As exemplified by the recent agreement between the country's ruling party and Hamas rather than all stakeholders in the Palestine-Israel conflict, a weakness in its conduct of international relations and position in the Security Council continues to be communication: on each occasion on which its vote was controversial, the Government has failed to anticipate the shift in the rhetorical war of words from the chambers of the UN to influential media. It underestimated the power of the media and communications machinery, and to counter this, the Department of International Relations and Co-operation (DIRCO) must be considerably strengthened. It is often weak in articulating the country's foreign policy imperatives in normal circumstances, let alone in complex matters relating to their application to international relations.

The UN and Peacebuilding

Partly informed by South Africa's own extraordinary political trans-

⁵ Quoted in DIRCO, IGD and SAIIA. *South Africa in the UN Security Council 2011-2012: A Report on the Government-Civil Society Strategy Dialogue*. Pretoria, November 2010.

formation and peace diplomacy in Africa, the country has put coordinated and structured post-conflict development firmly on the agenda of the global South and, subsequently, that of the UN. It should be remembered that Pretoria played a key role in helping to negotiate the AU's Post-Conflict Reconstruction Policy Framework of June 2005 (Landsberg 2009). In the context of the peacebuilding commission, South Africa has stressed the need for a long-term perspective that supports countries emerging from conflict in order to prevent relapses. Equally important is the need to put them on the road to recovery, development and self-reliance, in which the decision of the UN Summit in 2005 to establish a Peacebuilding Commission was a milestone. South Africa held the view that the Peacebuilding Commission would be an important interface between the Security Council and ECOSOC, and that its mandate needed to be open-ended enough to enable the participation of any country that could contribute effectively to its work (Landsberg 2009).

UN Interface with Regional Organizations

South Africa has adopted a close and structured working relationship between the UN and regional organisations under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, and has helped redefine the UN-AU interface in favour of African peace and development. It has successfully argued that the UN's capacity to discharge its developmental and political responsibilities requires cooperation with regional organisations to build on their long expertise. This has encouraged the UN to work through and support regional initiatives where there are synergies with UN goals and programmes, and where regional organisations can assist the UN. Overall, the idea is to ensure that UNSC expansion does not undermine regional self-reliance. A balance is also needed between working through regional organisations and overburdening them.

A major goal of South Africa, in conjunction with the AU, was to create synergy between the UN Security Council and other regional organisations, in particular the AU Peace and Security Council, with a view to preventing conflict in Africa. As former Minister Dlamini-Zuma put it: "(...) South Africa will strive in conjunction with the AU to create synergies between the work of the AUPC and the UNSC with a view to the prevention of outbreak of violence and conflict in the continent"⁶. Pretoria vigorously pursued this aim and during the second tenure of its presidency a special debate took place, chaired by Mbeki and attended by heads of government serving on the Se-

⁶ Quoted in DIRCO, IGD and SAIIA. *South Africa in the UN Security Council 2011-2012: A Report on the Government-Civil Society Strategy Dialogue*. Pretoria, November 2010.

curity Council, the African Union Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) and African leaders who were non-permanent members. The outcome was the adoption of Resolution 1809, which welcomed the role of the AU in bringing peace and stability to the continent and thereby expressed support for its work.

In part because of South Africa's agitation, the council expressed determination to enhance the relationship between the UN and regional organisations in accordance with Chapter VIII. In this, it made the point that common and coordinated efforts undertaken by the UN and regional organisations, in particular the AU, should be based on complimentary capacities and make full use of their experiences.

South Africa convened a joint meeting of the AU Peace and Security Council and the UNSC at ambassadorial level in April 2008, to explore ways to maximise the cooperative relationship between itself and the AU Peace and Security Council in the fields of conflict prevention, resolution and management. This meeting was a visible sign of the willingness of the two bodies to work together in the interest of international peace and security, based on the logic of comparative advantage. In 2012 again, during South Africa's second stint on the UNSC as non-permanent member, it stressed that, "in accordance with the provision of Chapter VIII of the UN Charter", there was need for "common ground" between the UNSC and the AUPSC (DIRCO 2011).

South Africa and Global Environmental Governance

South Africa's ratification of multilateral environmental agreements and its hosting of the WSSD in 2003, and again the COP 17 Summit in 2012, have bolstered its reputation as a pivotal player in global environmental governance, campaigning for strengthening of the UN Environmental Programme (UNEP), the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), and the World Bank-driven Global Environmental Facility (GEF)--all key structures in the global environmental system. During the 2005 Millennium Plus 5 Summit, South Africa and other developing countries called for the development of a more inclusive International Framework on Climate Change beyond the expiry of the Kyoto Protocol. These countries supported the idea of the establishment of a UN Environment Organisation, as well as the establishment of a National Disaster Relief and Environmental Protection Fund (Landsberg 2009). South Africa has stressed the importance of efficiency and effectiveness, and the need for the World Bank and other institutions, as well as the industrialized powers, to meet their obligations towards the South and

the developing world.

South Africa is one of only four developing countries donating to the GEF trust fund, a position it used to advance the African Agenda and Agenda of the South and push for greater coordination and cooperation between UNEP and related agencies. In the UN CSD, South Africa has been active - especially as a chair in 2004 - in developing mechanisms for synergising various plans of action, including Rio, WSSD, COP 16 and COP 17. Pretoria has recognized the need to develop sustainable development strategies, including an integrated policy framework for harmonising industrial policies and environmental governance, and developing meaningful links between social, economic and environmental dimensions.

Conclusion

South Africa has been an avid supporter of UN reform during the cause of the past two decades. On issues of conflict and threats to international peace and security, the post-apartheid South African governments have prompted middle powers and countries from the South to help challenge the dominant powers. We take this to include not just the western powers, but other dominant powers like Russia and China as well. It is determined to prevent an abuse of the Charter by states for selfish foreign policy aims and is concerned about the power some countries have over the UN simply through contributing to the bulk of its budget.

It not only sought to reform the UNSC, the UNGA and the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOC), but also strengthen the capacity of the UN bureaucracy. During the period 2005 to 2007, it galvanised members of the G77+China and others behind UNGA resolutions to increase representation of developing countries in the UN Secretariat, improve access of vendors amongst them in the UN procurement system, enhance the accountability of the Secretariat, set apart funds for refurbishment of the UN's headquarters, and provide additional resources for the expansion of Secretariat personnel. Pretoria sought to defend the integrity of the UN and multilateralism by securing its financial position and urging developed and developing countries alike to meet their obligations.

UN reform seems poised to be a more tardy, tedious and long-term project than South Africa often makes it out to be. But this is not a good enough reason for the Republic to rest on its laurels. South Africa should continue to beat the transformation drum, but should do so in partnership with others and stress multilateral engagement for the sake of multilateral

transformation.

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ABSTRACT

Post-apartheid South Africa pursued a pro-multilateral stance in world – regarding multilateral institutions as crucial instruments for reinforcing its new-found image as a champion for southern African and African causes. Challenging the hegemony and dominance of western powers in particular, powerful countries in general, was at the heart of South Africa's multilateral strategies. Central to all multilateral engagements was respect for international law and the centrality of the United Nations (UN), stressing the promotion of human rights, debt relief, peace and stability, an equitable global trading system and sustainable development. Also of priority was reform of the UN and institutions of global governance, including the World Bank and International Monetary Fund.

KEYWORDS

Post-apartheid; South Africa; Multilateralism.

*Received on November 10, 2015.
Approved on February 03, 2016.*