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# South Africa's Changing Role in Global Development Structures – Being in Them but Not Always of Them

*Elizabeth Sidiropoulos*

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Elizabeth Sidiropoulos

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## Abbreviations

AAAP	Addis Ababa Action Plan
AAG	African Advisory Group
ANC	African National Congress
APDev	African Platform for Development Effectiveness
APRM	African Peer Review Mechanism
AU	African Union
BEPS	base erosion and profit-shifting
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa
CAP	Common African Position on the post-2015 Development Agenda
CBDR	Common But Differentiated Responsibilities
CRFs	Country Results Frameworks
DIRCO	Department of International Relations and Cooperation (South Africa)
DRM	domestic resource mobilisation
DWG	Development Working Group (G20)
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
EME	emerging market economy
FfD	Financing for Development (United Nations)
G20	Group of 20
G77 + China	Group of 77 plus China
GDP	gross domestic product
GNI	gross national income
GPI	Global Partnership Initiatives (GPIs)
GPEDC	Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation
HLM	High Level Meeting
HLPF	High Level Political Forum
IATF	Inter-Agency Task Force on Financing for Development (United Nations)
IBSA	India, Brazil, South Africa Dialogue Forum
IFFs	illicit financial flows
IGN	inter-governmental negotiations
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LICs	low-income countries
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MICs	middle-income countries
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development (African Union)
NDPs	National Development Plans
NT	National Treasury (South Africa)

ODA	official development assistance
OECD-DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development – Development Assistance Committee
OWG	Open Working Group
PBIG	Post-Busan Interim Group
SA	South Africa/South African
SAIIA	South African Institute of International Affairs
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SSC	South-South Cooperation
UN	United Nations
UNDCF	United Nations Development Cooperation Forum
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
USD	United States dollar
WP-EFF	Working Party on Aid Effectiveness (OECD)
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development

## Executive summary

Since it threw off the mantle of pariah-hood and re-joined the international community in 1994, South Africa has not only sought to address its own significant socio-economic challenges, that were a legacy of apartheid, but equally, to stake a place for itself in the global development debates and structures. The democratically elected government led by the African National Congress (ANC) from 1994 onwards aimed to transform South African society and to work towards reforming the superstructure of the international system, which also impacted on poverty and inequality in poor countries, not just domestic factors.

In his first “State of the Nation” address in South Africa’s Parliament in 1994, President Nelson Mandela equated the freedom of the individual, which had just been attained in South Africa politically but not socio-economically, to the restoration of human dignity. He said: “My government’s commitment to create a people-centred society of liberty binds us to the pursuit of the goals of freedom from want, freedom from hunger, freedom from deprivation, freedom from ignorance, freedom from suppression and freedom from fear” (Mandela, 1994, para. 21).

A few years later, opening the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in August 2002, President Mbeki reminded the assembled delegates that:

Our common and decisive victory against domestic apartheid confirms that you, the peoples of the world, have both the responsibility and the **possibility to achieve a decisive victory against global apartheid**. Out of Johannesburg and out of Africa, must emerge something new that takes the world forward away from the entrenchment of global apartheid, to the realisation of the goals of sustainable development. (Mbeki, 2002, para. 24, emphasis added)

The end of the Cold War removed the ideological camps of the first, second and third world, but not the disparities between the industrialised and the developing world. From the Millennium Development Goals and the World Summit on Sustainable Development to the most recent and ambitious global social compact contained in the Sustainable Development Goals, these initiatives sought to address the huge developmental challenges facing the developing world. South Africa has been active in all of these United Nations processes as well as in others that are aimed at addressing the significant inequalities between and within countries.

This paper explores how South Africa’s engagement in global development structures has evolved since 1994. When South Africa re-entered the international community, many in the North considered the country as one that espoused a similar world view to theirs. What they did not sufficiently appreciate was the ANC’s own historical philosophical underpinnings, which aimed to reaffirm South Africa’s place in the Global South and African firmament after the end of apartheid. This understanding is necessary in the context of South Africa’s priorities over the last 25 years, not least in the development debates.

The paper begins by discussing the evolving global development landscape of the 21st century. The last two decades have seen significant attempts to develop global norms that reflected the desire to create a more just world and tackle the serious developmental challenges faced by many developing countries. The paper explores these initiatives and divides them broadly into three streams – those undertaken by the United Nations, those



begun by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development – Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC), and those that may be understood as part of club governance processes. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the Financing for Development conferences, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the United Nations Development Cooperation Forum fall under the first stream. The various OECD-DAC High Level Forums, which culminated in Busan in 2011 and led to the establishment of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (GPEDC), form part of the second stream. The G20, the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) and IBSA (India, Brazil, South Africa Dialogue Forum), (and the broader South-South Cooperation initiatives) fall under the third stream.

South Africa has been involved in all of these and the paper analyses the country's engagement in these global development structures along with its contribution to the evolution of African agency on the issues of global development. Particularly under the presidency of Thabo Mbeki (1999-2008), South Africa strongly criticised existing power relations, while at the same time undertaking an important set of strategic engagements with the North, centred on the vision of an African renaissance and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) initiative which considered the G8 as a platform from which to garner international support for Africa's development. Considered as an emerging regional power, South Africa has been pragmatic in its engagement, often seeking to build consensus in international fora rather than adopting polarising positions. In addition, the country's sophisticated economy, that in 2005 for example comprised 22 per cent of Africa's total real gross domestic product (GDP) (AfDB [African Development Bank Group], 2014), gave it significant status in economic and developmental forums in terms of representing African interests.

It was during the Mbeki period that South Africa also played an important role in the foundations of greater African agency in the way in which African countries interacted with the North in particular. Over time, and with the election to the SA presidency of Jacob Zuma in 2009, South Africa's previous leadership on the continent in terms of institution and norm-development shifted gear. It began to focus more on China and the BRICS countries, which created the perception in some quarters in Africa that Africa itself was less important.

South Africa shares China and India's aversion to being sucked into global structures that are meant to perpetuate a power system they did not construct, and that wishes to spread developmental responsibilities to the South. Internationally, during the 2010s, there was a greater focus on South-South Cooperation (SSC) and the role it could play in assisting poor countries. Countries such as China and India, which were increasingly significant players in SSC, considered this focus as a function of the North wanting to reduce its own aid commitments, which the South regards as a historical responsibility emanating from colonialism. South Africa has consistently argued that Northern aid cannot be put on the same platform as SSC as they have different origins. In this, South Africa has found common cause with the other big Southern countries.

At the same time, however, African countries – the recipients of both Northern aid and SSC, especially from China and India – consider certain principles such as local ownership, accountability, and transparency – not often part of the way in which SSC is carried out – as essential. The Zuma presidency (2009-2018) coincided with the strengthening of African institutions. These institutions began to become more active and helped to coordinate Africa's voice better internationally.

The paper analyses South Africa's engagement over the last quarter century in each of the processes that were significant in the context of global development debates: the United Nations (the MDGs, the United Nations Development Cooperation Forum (UNDCF), Financing for Development (FfD), and the SDGs); the processes emerging out of the OECD-DAC; and club governance initiatives (most notably the G20 and its Development Working Group; the BRICS; and IBSA). In the United Nations (UN) process, during crucial stages, South Africa chaired the G77 plus China grouping, giving it significant influence in the proceedings and in the largest grouping at the United Nations. In the G20, as the only African country, it has sought to infuse the agenda with issues that have a significant bearing on African development. It is also a proponent of South-South Cooperation. South Africa is different from the other major "Southern providers" in this regard, however, because its assistance is much smaller and mostly focused on state-building dimensions (and less so on concessional finance or lines of credit, and so on).

How other African states and continental institutions have engaged on global development and on the broader debate on development cooperation in recent years is also discussed. South Africa has always identified Africa as a core pillar of its foreign policy. However, in global forums it has not always seen eye to eye with the rest of the continent, a function of its own economic and political make-up and related national interests.

From around 2008, African states became much more coordinated in the articulation of their positions in global development fora, most notably through the African Union (AU), the NEPAD Agency and the African Platform for Development Effectiveness. Over the course of the last two decades, African states have pushed for much more accountability and transparency in development cooperation, not only among traditional aid donors, but also from Southern providers.

The adoption of common positions that could then be taken into negotiations became the approach adopted by Africa. Greater institutionalisation enabled a stronger African voice, even if common positions are often the result of a series of compromises among member states, which may be inimical to bold policy positions. Furthermore, the continent's economic and political diversity makes it difficult to carry through continental decisions to the national level. This is often a challenge that faces South Africa in certain fora, where its specific interests may not be entirely consistent with those of other African countries. However, against a history of a weak and fragmented Africa in global forums, these developments have been extremely important. Through the NEPAD Agency and the AU, as well as the leadership of a number of African states, such as Kenya and Ghana, Africa has played a substantial role in many of the global development debates. Two examples are the process of negotiating the SDGs; and the hosting of the second High Level Meeting of the GPEDC, in both of which Kenya played an important leadership role.

Lastly, the paper explores possible avenues that South Africa might pursue in the current polarised multilateral environment. South Africa's biggest challenge is the tension regarding its Global South identity, which has to balance its commitment to African issues and institutional processes (many of which it played an important role in establishing), and its positioning via its membership of the BRICS (largely) as an emerging power that seeks to contest the current global power configurations.

South Africa's global engagement is pragmatic but the country has often emphasised that it will not accept Western/OECD-DAC precepts. The United Nations, for all its weaknesses, is thus politically more legitimate than these bodies. At the same time, South Africa sees the value in engaging in "clubs" even though they may have limited input legitimacy, such as the G20, the BRICS and IBSA, in advancing the case for Africa's development. South Africa has been strategic in using the G20 on global economic governance issues that have a direct bearing or act as an obstacle to Africa's development trajectory, such as illicit financial flows (IFFs) or infrastructure financing. In the United Nations fora, South Africa has chosen to play a meaningful role by being elected to chair the G77. A chair of the G77 faces the challenge of aggregating diverse views in the grouping so as to maintain coherence within the group as well as moving the overall process forward constructively. South Africa has shown adeptness at that. This too requires South Africa to play a bridging role within the Global South.

South Africa's engagement in all the fora discussed in this study is coloured by the contestation between North and South. The world is in a state of flux and the erosion of multilateralism and the current global order are being felt across issues. South Africa should engage more actively with other African states bilaterally and through NEPAD and the AU on what the content and the process would be for a global development architecture that reflects these power changes. The United Nations is of course the most legitimate and inclusive body for both the "what" and the "how" of development, but many of the potential innovations in platforms and content may come from other processes. Sometimes the outcomes of these processes define the agenda in other fora. South Africa and other Global South actors do not have the luxury of allowing potential vacuums to be filled by other agendas. To avoid this when it comes to African concerns around global development, South Africa could for example, make proposals to other major Southern actors on the means to arrive at a set of principles among Southern providers that reflect these.

The new challenges presented to Southern actors in terms of their responsibilities to development create opportunities to consider a platform that allows Southern actors – both those providing cooperation and those receiving it – to shape their own narratives, separate from the discussions in "mixed" forums, which include the North. South Africa could work in the first instance with its IBSA partners (and the BRICS) in exploring such an idea that could be focused on developing some methods to address the concerns of African states about Southern providers. This might be a code of conduct, building on the South-South Cooperation principles, but addressing more directly the reservations some countries and civil society actors have. In addition, the UNDCF is a United Nations (UN) platform which South Africa and other Southern actors could amplify to take a lead on this issue. But it would need to be resourced properly by them.

A new global development architecture may be necessary in the medium term, but it is unlikely to emerge in the short term given that the global system is becoming more fragmented. Important Southern actors such as South Africa – actors who do not dominate the global development landscape but nevertheless have credibility among both Southern and Northern countries – should use their leverage to encourage innovation and experimentation so that some of the progressive changes witnessed in the global development cooperation terrain in the last two decades are not lost.

## 1 Introduction

*“A global human society [...] characterised by islands of wealth, surrounded by a sea of poverty, is unsustainable. [...] For the first time in human history, human society possesses the capacity, the knowledge and the resources to eradicate poverty [...].”*

*(Opening address by President Thabo Mbeki at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, 26 August 2002.)*

At a moment of significant geopolitical flux, mid-way through the second decade of the 21st century, all 193 members of the United Nations were able to adopt “Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”. This was considered a “major accomplishment” and “gave both the United Nations and multilateralism a new lease of life”, as Kamau, Chasek and O’Connor write in their book of the inside story of the sustainable development goals (2018, p. 2). Eight years after the global financial crisis, which revealed the excesses of the financialisation of globalisation, the Sustainable Development Goals represented a vision of a more humane world that also emphasised the inter-connectedness between development, prosperity and planetary sustainability. For all the associated trade-offs in the negotiations, this was probably the high-water mark of the evolution of the focus on global development.

In the last two decades, the global development debate and the global governance architecture have sought to be more inclusive, building on past experiences and reflecting the changing patterns of power.

However, international cooperation and consensus are becoming increasingly difficult as the world becomes more polarised, as populist and nationalist movements shun multilateralism, preferring insular and protectionist policies, and as rising powers, such as China, become more willing to project their positions and seek to influence the global discourse.

South Africa, while by no means an emerging power in the way that China or India is, is a microcosm of some of the new tensions experienced by the liberal international order that is fraying at the edges. South Africa is not a “Western country”<sup>1</sup> based in Africa, although no doubt its polity has been shaped by the forces of change of the late 1980s and 1990s which saw the triumph of Western economic and political systems; it is strongly in the camp of the Global South and perceives that the rules that govern the global system are heavily influenced by the reigning discourse in the North.

South Africa has been an important actor in global development debates across a number of forums. Inhabiting the poorest continent and facing significant developmental challenges

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1 By this, I mean a country's world view. Although recognising that these are fluid concepts, a Western country refers to the industrialised countries of Europe, North America and Japan and Australia, who by and large share similar views about the global system. South Africa's liberal democratic constitution and its espousal of human right and democracy made many in the West believe that it shared a common outlook on global affairs. However, South Africa considers itself a part of the Global South. These terms reflect some historical and current fault lines of how governments organise themselves globally, although they should not be viewed as absolute in their classification.

itself, the country has focused many of its efforts on development in Africa. Multilateral forums have been important vehicles for these efforts.

This paper explores South Africa's engagement in global development structures and how this has changed since 1994 when it re-entered the international community. First, it discusses the evolving global development landscape; second, it examines South Africa's engagement in global development structures and its contribution to the evolution of African agency on the issues of global development; third, the paper explores how other African states and continental institutions have engaged on global development and on the broader debate on development cooperation in recent years; and, lastly, the paper explores possible avenues that South Africa might pursue in a polarised multilateral environment.

## 2 Global development in a fractured world

In the early years of the 21st century the world was galvanised to adopt the UN Millennium Development Goals to address poverty and underdevelopment in developing countries. The MDGs focused on eight crucial goals relating to poverty and underdevelopment, with the eighth goal emphasising the importance of partnership between the developing and developed world to achieve them. The goals were revolutionary in that they committed all nations to a partnership to reduce global poverty in the developing world. They were, however, not without detractors – those who argued that although the MDGs were to be lauded for setting as their goal socio-economic development and poverty reduction, they nevertheless perpetuated the ideology of neo-liberalism and global capital, key causes themselves of poverty and underdevelopment in the South (Zondi & Mthembu, 2017, p. 8).

The MDGs acted as a powerful rallying cry for development and for official development assistance (ODA). The targets set, enabled a global monitoring of progress, and catalysed debate around implementation gaps, although the North failed (with a few notable exceptions) to achieve 0.7 per cent of gross national income (GNI) to development aid, annually.

The financial crisis of 2007-2009, which started in the United States and Europe, made the attainment of 0.7 per cent even less possible. It also strengthened the argument that the West did not have all the answers to all the questions of development, and economic and political governance. China's own significant development strides since the late 1970s, albeit embracing some of capitalism's characteristics, strengthened the argument that there wasn't necessarily one economic truth that provided the answer to developmental challenges. State capitalism, as practised by China, could work. During the financial crisis a number of other Asian economies were able to sail through the rapids.

Furthermore, the Western approach since the 1980s and 1990s that achieving development was dependent primarily on a poor country's undertaking of certain types of domestic economic reforms ignored the existence of global structural factors that impact on domestic policies, choices and outcomes. The experiences of the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) in the 1980s and 1990s highlighted the tension between welfare and economic growth and macro-economic stability. The policy conditionalities of the Bretton Woods Institutions were considered diktats by developing countries and are key

ingredients of the distrust that the developing world has for the rules and institutions developed by the North.<sup>2</sup>

The MDGs were accompanied in 2005 by a commitment by the OECD-DAC and its partners to the Paris Declaration that set out the principles that should define the way in which these countries, their partners and international organisations delivered aid in order to improve its efficacy and reduce the fragmentation that had characterised it (Herbert, 2012, p. 72).

However, more than a decade later these principles are virtually forgotten, as established aid donors aim to out-compete their emerging rivals from the South (most notably China) in geopolitical influence. The North has “southernised” its narrative of development cooperation, thus undermining its own attempts to create universally accepted institutions on development. In so doing, “Southern and Northern partners are competing and collaborating but also converging on a more open agenda of subsidized support for private sector growth (and state-owned enterprises) in the name of ‘development’” (Mawdsley, 2017, p. 113).

How did this happen?

## 2.1 Global development processes in 21st century

The first few years of the 21st century were characterised by significant attempts to develop global norms that reflected the desire to create a more just world. Emerging from the attempts to address the serious developmental challenges still faced by many developing countries, there were a number of important initiatives in global development. These initiatives can be divided into two streams – those undertaken by the United Nations and those begun by the OECD-DAC.

### 2.1.1 The UN streams in development

The key UN processes or initiatives began with the Millennium Summit and the Millennium Declaration in 2000, out of which emerged the MDGs, a set of goals to achieve development and halve poverty by 2015. This was followed in 2002 by the first international conference on financing for development in Monterrey, which reemphasised 0.7 per cent of GNI to ODA if developing countries were to achieve the MDGs. The Monterrey Consensus also recognised that poverty reduction required more open trade by improved market access and investment to increase the trade potential of developing countries. This was followed in 2008 by the second conference in Doha during the global financial crisis, and in 2015 by the third one in Addis Ababa, on the eve of the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which were agreed a few months later in New York in September.<sup>3</sup>

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2 See Weiss and Thakur (2010, p. 160) and Rapley (2017, pp. 280-283).

3 For an extensive discussion of the MDGs and a critical evaluation of them, see Fukuda-Parr (2017).

In 2005 the United Nations agreed to the establishment of a forum focusing on development cooperation. The Development Cooperation Forum (UNDCF) was intended to act as a focal point for the “evolution of universally accepted principles, definitions and norms in development cooperation; facilitate solid analysis of information on implementation; and ensure comprehensive transparency in the allocation and spending of development funding” (Fues, Chaturvedi, & Sidiropoulos, 2012, pp. 252-253). It was another milestone in building a more harmonised and universal system around the implementation of global development. The UN Development Cooperation Forum and its biennial meetings are supposed to “bridge an institutional gap [...] by providing an inclusive platform for dialogue and mutual learning that would be open to all development actors” (Fues, et al., 2012, p. 252). Before the UNDCF there was no real policy space to talk about development cooperation outside the DAC, which was considered by developing countries “the rich countries’ club”. Yet, the UNDCF suffers from insufficient financial support, even from among Southern countries.

In addition, since 1978, the United Nations has been involved in SSC processes through the South-South Cooperation office.

### 2.1.2 The DAC stream: from Rome to Busan

The second stream of processes was that led by the OECD-DAC group of developed countries. Running parallel to the UN processes and in complementary fashion, the OECD-DAC organised the first High Level Meeting (HLF) on aid effectiveness in Rome in 2003, where donors agreed to harmonise and coordinate their actions better, ensuring that they were aligned with the recipient countries’ policies, procedures and programmes. This was intended to address the central challenge of improving the impact of aid on development outcomes, also in the context of the adoption of the MDGs. The second HLF met in Paris in 2005 and adopted the Paris Declaration (see below). The third meeting in Accra in 2008 focused on post-conflict states and fragility, while also explicitly recognising that civil society organisations had a role to play in development. At the fourth HLF held in Busan in 2011, emerging powers as well as non-state actors (including the private sector), participated. The Working Party on Aid Effectiveness that had steered the various HLFs was replaced after the 4th meeting by a Post-Busan Interim Group, which prepared the way for the establishment of a global partnership, which in 2014 was launched in Mexico City – the GPEDC. The Busan meeting also confirmed the rising power of China, India and Brazil and their ability to resist DAC members’ desire to incorporate them into a shared system of obligations and targets (Mawdsley, 2017, p. 111).

### 2.1.3 Other development processes

Outside of these formal multilateral processes there is also the G20 Development Working Group where all of the above actors participate (UN, OECD and the Bretton Woods Institution). In addition, emerging powers (of which China is the most notable) have begun experimenting with parallel institutions to foster development, such as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, in the case of China. IBSA has also identified development partnerships as an important element of its focus, as have the BRICS, who have regular exchanges among their agencies on development cooperation.

As the emerging powers have felt stronger and more willing to contest global processes which have been historically led by the West, so too have the competing camps in development become clearer. For a long time, the OECD-DAC was the most dominant development structure. Established in 1960 it was a club of Northern (Western) actors engaged in aid in the third world. With decades of on-the-ground experience of doing development, the DAC had built up a formidable knowledge base. Although it increasingly became more inclusive in the 2000s, a number of big emerging economies continued to view it with suspicion and were unwilling to associate with it too closely. Today, differences within the DAC have become more accentuated as the US makes clearer that its aid money will have to serve the “America First” dictum of the Trump administration (Bolton, 2018).

The big Southern players, who provide loans, concessional finance or technical assistance to other developing countries, form another grouping. Unlike the DAC this grouping is not formalised or always coherent. It includes China, India, Brazil and South Africa. They have not wanted to be equated in their development cooperation with the DAC in terms of their responsibilities, accountability mechanisms and motives. They argue strongly that their assistance to other developing countries is based on SSC, which is driven by a different history and objectives.<sup>4</sup>

Smaller Southern players, both low-income countries (LICs) and middle-income countries (MICs), form another grouping. Each of these engages in global development structures in different ways depending on their interpretation of the underlying motives of the structures themselves and the power equations. Their acute power asymmetry means that it is important for them to be engaging in all forums as they are constrained in their ability to change the debate or the agenda. These countries – even MICs such as Indonesia or Colombia – participate in existing processes, including those outside of the UN, and are less vocal about altering the global order.

One of the most contentious elements of this “tug o’ war” on global development has played out within both the structures (UN or DAC) *and* the principles.

#### 2.1.4 Much ado about principles

The various development processes since the Millennium Summit in 2000 that led to the adoption of the MDGs to eradicate extreme poverty by 2015, brought into the debate certain principles that are still regarded as important in global development, even if not all countries ascribe to them. These principles however are not uncontested insofar as their universality is concerned.

The five principles that became the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness in 2005 were ownership, alignment, harmonisation, results, and mutual accountability. These were supposed to set out the commitments of the OECD-DAC, international organisations, multilateral development banks (MDBs) and partner countries on how aid would be administered. In 2008 the commitments made in the Accra Agenda for Action, the third High Level Meeting of the OECD-DAC process, echoed those of Paris – ownership,

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<sup>4</sup> See, for example, Chaturvedi (2016).



inclusive partnerships, delivering results, and capacity development. Accra broadened the scope of development aid in recognising the role of other development actors such as Southern donors, civil society organisations (CSOs) and global funds (Abdel-Malek, 2015). It also encouraged “all development actors, including those engaged in South-South Cooperation, to use the Paris Declaration principles as a point of reference in providing development cooperation” (OECD, 2008, section 19.9).

The HLF in Busan in 2011 was intended to develop a common set of principles on the “how” of effective development, as well as agreement on a common platform. Unfortunately, for reasons documented by Bracho (2017), the post-Busan process to establish the GPEDC, to which both Northern and Southern “providers” would belong and which would thus have common principles applicable to all, became extremely fraught and failed to convince the big Southern countries to join.

The four principles that were agreed to in the GPEDC are: focus on results, country ownership of development priorities, inclusive partnerships for development, and transparency and mutual accountability. There is a clear continuity – at least in the principles – between the Paris principles and those of the GPEDC. The Paris principles continue to have relevance, but they are contested in so far as the big Southern powers regard them as OECD-DAC constructs relating specifically to Northern aid, even though the signatories included many partner countries. Furthermore, their continued relevance is challenged by the non-adherence of many OECD-DAC members.

In contrast, the principles of South-South Cooperation, as set out in the Buenos Aires Plan of Action (BAPA) of 1978 and confirmed subsequently in the Yammasoukro and Nairobi documents, are: respect for national sovereignty and leadership, horizontality and equality, non-conditionality, mutual benefit, and complementarity to North-South cooperation. The UNSSC (UN South-South Cooperation) conference in Nairobi in 2009, which assessed 30 years of SSC since the Buenos Aires Plan of Action, also encouraged developing countries to assess the effectiveness of SSC and triangular cooperation, as well as to develop methodologies and statistics that enhanced national coordination mechanisms.

The 2010 Brasilia Declaration of IBSA outlined the basic principles of SSC (IBSA [India, Brazil, South Africa], 2010). These were reaffirmed by the IBSA states in a declaration on South-South Cooperation in June 2018. The Declaration emphasised that at the core of SSC lies “[r]espect for national sovereignty [...]. SSC is about interdependences and not ‘new dependencies’. The partner countries themselves initiate, organise and manage SSC activities.” It went on to note that the “primary responsibility towards development rests with the States themselves under their ownership and leadership.” SSC is voluntary in nature and it is an expression of solidarity. The declaration emphasised that SSC was not aid, nor was it obligatory as ODA was (IBSA, 2018, Principles).

Attempts to create universal frameworks by which to measure or evaluate both SSC and Northern aid have often had to contend with the belief among big Southern countries that, while there are similarities, the frameworks should be kept separate. Some of the evolving principles that have dominated the discourse include the following:

The first of these is the **universalism of principles such as human rights**, although which elements are more important is still contested: Is it a question of socio-economic or political rights? The former are regarded in practice by the West as “second-order” rights

while the opposite is true among developing countries (Thérien, 2015, p. 229). Universalism has often been used to project a certain world view, while undermining other equally relevant norms,<sup>5</sup> such as elevating socio-economic rights to the same importance as political rights –after all, they both relate to the dignity of humanity, which we should all recognise as a universal right. Universality of norms has been seen as an instrument of neo-colonial interference (Thérien, 2015, pp. 233-234).

Second, the principles of **harmonisation and coordination** of development cooperation projects and programmes are presented in this discourse as essential for more effective development. They stand in contrast to fragmentation, a dominant feature of the aid sector over the last couple of decades.<sup>6</sup> But harmonisation in the interests of efficiency discounts the overarching political considerations that have always been key elements of any development cooperation carried out by donors and accepted by recipients: it has sought to reduce to technical elements, what are in fact highly political drivers.

Third, on the global, national and subnational level **multi-stakeholder partnerships** are considered key building blocks to achieve development goals. This is premised correctly on the recognition that nation-states are not the only actors or the most significant in financial terms, although they have a role to play in regulating and defining the rules of the game. However, there needs to be a clearer articulation of the areas in which such partnerships may be effective and where they may infringe on the responsibilities of states. While inclusivity is a laudable goal, it is often very difficult to get the balance right.<sup>7</sup>

Fourth, **accountability** in external engagements has also become more important. The North has adopted that as a mantra of its engagements at least in theory, but so too have Africans, although not necessarily for the reasons that the West might think. (There is a perception among some actors in the South that clamours for accountability from the North have everything to do with attempts to bind Southern countries to the West's indicators of effective development and the associated responsibilities.)

Accountability, inclusivity, better coordination, and global common rules may not be contested per se, but increasingly their interpretation and execution may be coloured by different countries' own historical context. For example, accountability may be limited to government-to-government rather than the broader civil society; the same may apply to inclusivity and so on.

### 2.1.5 Global Partnerships: contrasting the GPEDC with the SDGs

The most fraught engagement on development architecture after Busan was that between China, India, Brazil and the GPEDC.

The inaugural meeting of the GPEDC in 2014 was an attempt to create a new platform that reflected the changed global structure and power dynamics. Its origins lay in the OECD-DAC Working Party on Aid Effectiveness, which had been established after the

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5 For a discussion of universal values versus cultural relativism, see Caney (2005).

6 See an in-depth analysis of this in Klingebiel, Mahn, & Negre (2016).

7 Discussion at 2018 UNDCF meeting in New York, May 2018.

Rome High Level Meeting (HLM) in 2003 and was thus an OECD-DAC process. While there was a genuine desire to be more inclusive in the aftermath of Busan, the strong knowledge base and framework that the OECD had, inevitably meant that the GPEDC would battle to shake off this perception as well as to alter mindsets to reflect the shift from aid effectiveness to development effectiveness. The UNDP was asked, together with the DAC, to be the secretariat of the GPEDC, but this was not enough to minimise the dominance of the agenda by the North. It must be stressed, however, that this did not dissuade smaller developing economies from regarding the Busan process and its outcome as worthy of support.

The opposition to the GPEDC is really an issue of China, India and to some extent Brazil, with South Africa becoming a silent partner in this after the HLM in Mexico (2014).<sup>8</sup> The North sees its non-participation as eroding the inclusivity and legitimacy of the structure. The fact that the GPEDC does not operate under the United Nations (although the UNDP is involved) has provided an argument for countries such as China and India to stay out, arguing that such matters should ideally be handled within the UN. While this argument is part of their discomfort with the GPEDC, Bracho (2017) argues (based on his own direct involvement in the process) that the decision of China, India and Brazil to stay out of the GPEDC was fundamentally about their position and role in the global order that was in a state of flux.

The contestation of ideas and structures that the GPEDC has brought to the fore have included not only differences between the North and emerging economies, but also among certain emerging economies and others, and in turn between them and low-income countries. The South is not a monolith; countries such as Indonesia and Mexico have been very active in the GPEDC (Besharati, 2013b). So too have the African Union and many African countries. From the outset, China, India and Brazil were extremely wary of the Busan process that led to the GPEDC because it was seen as part of an OECD-DAC process that they suspected wanted to co-opt emerging powers into established Western frameworks and processes and to share the international development cooperation burden with them (Bracho, 2017; Mawdsley, 2017).

The UN frameworks, such as the Development Cooperation Forum, while significantly underfunded, are considered more neutral spaces where the focus is less on measuring and quantifying the assistance and the inevitable comparisons that ensue. This perspective, although it is not the only reason, is understandable because historically the United Nations has often “stood in sharp contrast to the reigning orthodoxy of the financially well-heeled World Bank and International Monetary Fund”, and which have also played an integral part in the development discourse and the related Washington consensus, which are dominated by the West (Weiss & Thakur, 2010, p. 164).

### 2.1.6 South-South Cooperation (SSC) and global development

Forty years ago, just as China was embarking on its big reform drive and India was still the “licence raj”, the Buenos Aires Action Plan defined the cooperation among developing

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8 The Mexican Gerardo Bracho has written eloquently and in great detail about this in his paper on “The troubled relationship of the emerging powers and the effective development cooperation agenda” (2017).

countries as largely technical (UN [United Nations], 1978). The power still lay predominantly with the North while the South was less resourced and less able to influence global structures and ideas.

Today, China's (and to a lesser extent India's) great power influence – both political and economic – has affected the way in which the traditional North views them and SSC. The increase in the contribution of Southern “aid” providers to global development through South-South Cooperation motivated many in the North to explore structures of global development that would be more inclusive *ab initio*: new structures rather than modified old structures and co-created rules and norms. This would reflect the new development cooperation reality, where distinctions of partners and recipients were removed. But the motive was not entirely altruistic. The High Level Meeting on Aid Effectiveness in Busan in 2011, out of which emerged in 2012 the Global Development Partnership on Effective Development Co-operation (GPEDC), took place in the aftermath of the global financial crisis that started in the North and placed significant constraints on European and North American budgets (Abdel-Malek, 2015).

In contrast, emerging economies, particularly China, seemed to be delinked from the crisis in North America and Europe. Busan's contested outcomes document<sup>9</sup> emphasised the “common but differential” in terms of responsibilities for development between the OECD-DAC countries and those of the South. The Busan meeting was fraught in many ways, as the major developing countries – China, India and Brazil – expressed serious reservations, concerned that they were being asked to shoulder burden-sharing equivalent to that of the wealthy countries while still having significant developmental challenges at home. Coupled with the North's financial crisis, it was not difficult for the emerging powers to make the assumption that these actions by the North were intended to facilitate a reduction in its contributions to development assistance – which developing countries regard as the North's historical responsibility.

In the period since, the differences between the Northern development providers and some in the South (the emerging economies) have widened. The South has also displayed fragmentation. The big Southern economies have expanded their portfolio of development finance and assistance to other developing economies. Although regarded as SSC, such projects have not necessarily been regarded as falling outside the boundaries of accountability and transparency expected of Northern aid programmes (Sidiropoulos, 2015).

There is much research going on into how SSC should be measured and assessed in India, China and Brazil. Chinese scholars, while recognising the strides made by the GPEDC in being more inclusive, also argue that it is the OECD-DAC's survival strategy (Li, 2017) in the same way that its TOSSD initiative<sup>10</sup> is about capturing all the financial flows (public and private, concessional and non-concessional) that contribute towards global public goods and sustainable development (Besharati, 2017). Li characterises it as an “exercise of the hidden ‘buy-in’ approach” by the OECD-DAC. It is the third expansion of the DAC-

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9 For a detailed analysis of the negotiations, see Bracho (2017).

10 TOSSD stands for Total Official Support for Sustainable Development. It was initiated by the OECD to complement ODA in the context of Agenda 2030 and the Addis Ababa Action Plan. TOSSD was developed to better monitor and evaluate the resource flows for these two processes.

dominated development cooperation system that is still in an aid paradigm and run largely by the North's development aid ministries (Li, 2017, pp. 4, 8).

So, the debate about a rebalancing in the ideology governing global structures is not a simple old, North-South differentiation. Much more complex, it reflects the changes in global power and influence over the last two decades, where the smaller developing economies believe that there should also be mechanisms of accountability for the emerging economies' actions as for the developed world's (Author's notes of NeST-Africa meeting, Midrand, March 2015). This does not in any way erode the perspective from the developing world that the framework of ideas that governs the global system is Northern-dominated and needs to be reformed too, and that, in effect, the North does not have the answers to all development challenges.

However, inasmuch as the DAC members have recognised that they have to adjust their structures to take into account altered development cooperation realities, so too do the emerging powers need to recognise that they are no longer "two-bit actors" on the global stage – not in diplomacy, not in peace and security, not in economics, and not in development cooperation. They are significant players within the international system, whose actions have consequences. They do need to show that their actions in the development cooperation domain are responsible and that they are accountable. They need to do that not for the DAC countries, nor in the way that the DAC may want them to, but because they emphasise their deep understanding of other developing countries based on their own developing status.<sup>11</sup>

Writing before the Busan HLF, Kim and Lightfoot (2011, p. 715) noted that it is clear that "emerging donors are largely judged by what they are not – other than what they actually are against the vantage point of the current mainstream international aid norms and principles". They highlight the concerns expressed in the literature about new donors as including: fragmentation of aid delivery, violations of corporate and national governance standards, free riding on debt relief, unfair company competition, and a scramble for extraction rights and resources. The new donors' non-compliance with DAC norms thus equates with a negative impact on aid delivery. Although the perspective is highly judgemental, it is rooted in a belief among DAC donors that the DAC norms are universal (Kim & Lightfoot, 2011, pp. 713-715).

Emerging donors' development cooperation is not linked to a particular monetary value and target. It is often not structured according to traditional monitoring and evaluation processes, nor is it necessarily linked to a particular development priority. Its provenance lies in SSC, which never included the principles of development aid or the objectives set out by the OECD-DAC. Providing a narrative on what their role is and should be in the global system and development matters would be one way of ensuring that these emerging powers control the narrative on SSC and that they can define what they are, rather than be defined by others. At present, the global development system is characterised by hybridity, where different models coexist. While this may not be good for coherence and

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11 Amitav Acharya (2017, "Abstract") defines the current order where the hegemon is declining as a multiplex world, one which envisions "a more pluralistic and diversified architecture of global governance shaped by a proliferation of transnational challenges, diffusion of new ideas, and expansion of actors and processes that lie at the center of global governance".

coordination, its benefits include providing a variety of options to various actors. It also illustrates the current fragmented nature of global politics.

### **3 South Africa and the international system**

In the 1990s South Africa (SA) was considered the poster child of the post-Cold War “end of history” paradigm. In 1994 it had “miraculously” emerged from apartheid and conflict as a liberal democracy with a market economy. South Africa adopted a liberal democratic constitution with a Bill of Rights that recognised both political and socio-economic rights, with vertical and horizontal application (South African Government, 1996). The North saw South Africa as one of its own in terms of its norms and values, even if it was never articulated in this way. This was indeed the message that was conveyed by the article that appeared under Nelson Mandela's name in *Foreign Affairs* in 1993, where he argued that human rights would guide the country's foreign policy (Mandela, 1993). Nevertheless, what many in the West did not fully appreciate was the historical context which shaped the new political elite's world view: the sense of global discrimination, the uneven playing field, and the skewed power distribution, in which countries in the developing world continued to be at a disadvantage in political and economic relations. The new SA elite came from a different background to the Western liberal democratic mode that was reflected in the constitution that was drafted.

Without reducing foreign policy to a monocausal driver, this disconnect between the way in which many Northern countries wanted South Africa to be (living in the “Mandela halo”) and what the country understood itself to be – African and a member of the Global South – has created one of the greatest disconnects of the country's foreign policy (see Landsberg, 2010; Sidiropoulos, 2008). Post-apartheid South Africa regarded itself as an African and Global South state in terms of its identity (Sidiropoulos, 2008).

South Africa's own aspirations to African (and Southern) leadership, and the underlying world view of the political elite, chafes at a world, rules and institutions that are shaped by the United States and Northern/Western dominance. Nevertheless, South Africa believed in international engagement to reform the system – whether on security matters such as nuclear non-proliferation, or global financial regulation.

Considered as an emerging regional power, South Africa has been pragmatic in its engagement often seeking to build consensus in international fora rather than adopting polarising positions. In 1994, South Africa's economy was 34 per cent of sub-Saharan Africa's but less than 0.6 per cent of global GDP in constant 2010 figures (World Bank, n. d.). It was a lion on the African stage, but not globally in economic terms. What gave it added influence on that stage was its “soft power” (Sidiropoulos, 2014). In the first decade of democratic South Africa, the country was often characterised as a bridge builder (Barber, 2004). This gradually changed under the administration that followed Mbeki.

#### **3.1 Positioning African development in global fora: the Mbeki period**

Under Thabo Mbeki's presidency (1999-2008) a strong critique of existing power relations was counterbalanced by a strategic engagement with the West, illustrated in his

signature African renaissance vision and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) initiative where he used the G8 as a platform from which to garner international support for Africa's development (Sidiropoulos & Hughes, 2004). Mbeki argued strongly for Africa to have a greater voice on global issues, as well as for a "compact" between Africa and the North, where the former would aim for better governance and the latter would support Africa's development objectives. (The APRM (African Peer Review Mechanism) Secretariat and the NEPAD Agency were the outgrowths of this.)

In the early 2000s, Mbeki was effective at mobilising a "coalition" of leading African countries to champion these initiatives and to incorporate them into the agenda of the African Union. NEPAD had its roots in an OAU summit in 1999 which had mandated Mbeki and Algerian president Bouteflika to negotiate Africa's debt with its external creditors. They asked for a broader mandate that would allow them to craft a more integrated and comprehensive plan for Africa's recovery (Sidiropoulos & Hughes, 2004, p. 68). This became the New Partnership for Africa's Development, a blueprint for African renewal. The Agency was established in 2003 and hosted in South Africa. During this period, Mbeki effectively marketed the plan to the developed world, using the G8 platform, where he (and other African leaders) were invited guests annually. The G8 Africa Action Plan adopted in Kananaskis in 2002 was a direct response to the NEPAD plan, setting out a list of initiatives that G8 members could undertake, while emphasising that good governance in recipient states would be key. NEPAD was intended as a different initiative from traditional aid processes. It covered the need of the North to tackle global structural issues, such as trade subsidies, while also emphasising direct investment into much needed infrastructure and other economic sectors.

Linked to this continental and visionary process intended to revitalise Africa, South Africa established the African Renaissance and International Cooperation Fund, with start-up funding of USD 30 million in 2001. Its goal was to promote democracy and good governance, socio-economic development and integration, and resolution of conflicts, among others, in Africa (Sidiropoulos, 2012, p. 226).

Mbeki also advocated a broader Southern vision, in line with South Africa's post-apartheid identity as both an African and a Southern actor. In 1999 he explored the idea of a G-South proposing this to China, India, Brazil, Mexico, Nigeria, Egypt and Saudi Arabia as a SSC counterpoint to the G8. This idea did not take off at the time; however, in 2003, the IBSA Forum was launched among the three developing country democracies of Brazil, India and South Africa (Landsberg, 2010, pp. 168-169). Among IBSA's objectives were to promote SSC and cooperate in global debates on development issues (IBSA, 2003). In 2004, the three countries established the IBSA Facility for Poverty and Hunger Alleviation.

### 3.2 Playing with giants: the Zuma period

The Zuma administration (2009-2018) did not abandon South Africa's priorities of Africa and the South when it assumed office. However, it became increasingly apparent that it favoured less of a strategic balancing between North and South, and between South Africa's own interests and those of Africa.

There were a number of international and external factors that positioned South Africa more directly in the active critique of existing systems. First the 2008 global financial crisis that began in North America and Europe showed to South Africa that deepening its economic links with other countries such as the BRIC, was a prudent option. Second, its membership of the BRICS from 2011 onwards drew it more closely into the circle of countries that were potential challengers to the existing order (particularly, China and Russia). Third, the short-sighted interventionism of NATO in Libya in 2011 and the ensuing chaos in that country and the Sahel, alienated South Africa from the tenets of the liberal order that it had supported. This included the norm of “responsibility to protect”, which had been adopted in 2005 and which South Africa had supported at the time. The norm had been used to justify the decision to intervene in Libya.<sup>12</sup> Lastly, its own domestic woes and a foreign policy leadership that lacked the strategic foresight displayed under the Mbeki administration, meant that its actions in various international fora were not always sufficiently thought through, coordinated, or the reasons for them well-articulated.<sup>13</sup>

During this period South Africa's foreign policy was characterised by less policy innovation and vision compared to the Mbeki period. As a middle-sized developing country, South Africa's global influence can only be advanced through assiduous relationship-building across dividing lines on common interests. The bridge-building role that it played quite successfully in the early years of democratic South Africa was less in evidence in the Zuma period (Masters, 2017). Although Africa remained the first priority in the narrative, there was much more foreign policy hype about South Africa's membership of the BRICS. However, BRICS membership was constantly linked to its potential to help meet Africa's developmental challenges (Sidiropoulos, Prinsloo, Mpungose, & Grobbelaar, 2018a). In 2013 when South Africa first chaired the BRICS, it was the first of the BRICS countries to have an outreach session between BRICS leaders and other countries, in this case a number of African leaders. The New Development Bank has also been presented as an important instrument for Africa's development (Sidiropoulos et al., 2018b).

South Africa's membership of the BRICS and its deepening political and economic relations with China in particular, saw the country adopt positions in global forums that seemed to avoid upsetting its bigger partners – its position on the South China Sea dispute that adopted the Chinese position on resolving issues bilaterally, or the annexation of Crimea where it chose to abstain from voting in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).

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12 South Africa voted to support UNSC resolution 1973 that authorised the use of force against Libya's Muammar Qaddafi in March 2011, but did so hoping that diplomatic avenues would be allowed before a full-scale air strike was executed. This was not the case, and South Africa criticised the actions of the NATO-led coalition. When Qaddafi fell and was subsequently killed by a mob in October 2011, no new government was able to reinstate order. With competing political authorities across Libya, opportunities were created for non-state actors to proliferate and discharged soldiers to deal in the weapons trade and other illicit activities. Libya's instability has compounded the fragile security environment in the Sahel and North Africa.

13 One such example was the decision to nominate a South African candidate for the AU Commission chair in 2012, but not to pursue the option of a second term, although the contest in 2012 had been fierce and South Africa angered many other African countries with the approach that it had taken. A second was the vote for UNSC resolution 1973 on Libya which provided for the use of force and which NATO allies took full advantage of.



However, the Zuma presidency also coincided with the strengthening of African institutions, which South Africa had helped to nurture during the Mbeki presidency. As will be discussed below, African states became much more coordinated in the articulation of their positions in global development fora, most notably through the AU and the African Platform for Development Effectiveness. They were able to adopt common positions and take these to the negotiations. Greater institutionalisation thus also meant that South Africa could play a less vocal role in such global processes.

A critical decision taken by the Zuma administration but never executed was the creation of the South African Development Partnership Agency, which would replace the ARF and ensure a more coordinated and accountable development partnership process. Many studies were undertaken in preparation for its establishment, including presentations to parliament. However, differences between Treasury and the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) about its governance apparently stalled the process.

In some ways, President Zuma's administration continued with the broad objectives set out by the previous government; however, the drive and strategic reflection were lacking that had previously seen South Africa build alliances or coalitions within Africa to drive continental institutions, advance Africa's interests in global fora, and develop continental developmental programmes. By the latter part of the Zuma presidency the internal "state capture" allegations had paralysed the operations of state, including foreign policy.

### 3.3 The African National Congress, global development and South-South Cooperation

During the presidency of Thabo Mbeki (1999-2008), decisions and policies related to international relations were centralised in the South African presidency. After the ANC removed him as president in 2008, the party sought to recapture policy-making and ensure that it remained at the centre of decision-making rather than the executive.

Government's actions and decisions must be understood against a backdrop of the ANC's world view – a global contestation of forces which is also illustrated in an untransformed global governance system where the North continues to dominate. An analysis of the ANC documents that emanated from the 2007, 2012 and 2017 ANC national conferences that set the party's agenda for the next five years, is useful in illustrating its view of the global system, as well as the importance of Southern solidarity, African development and reform of global governance. In the global development terrain, the ANC still views the world as divided into two camps with "imperialism [having] mutated into a sophisticated system in the globalised world" where "globalisation [... is] being shaped by the agenda of the dominant global forces" and where "an exploitative socio-economic system rules the world" (ANC [African National Congress], 2007, "Introduction").

These factors are considered as undermining the system of global governance by eroding its legitimacy which should derive from the integrity of the system to promote and protect a fair and level playing field. They explain the constant focus of both the ANC and the government it leads on global governance reform, which includes trade rules, the international financial institutions, and the UN Security Council.

The ANC regards itself as firmly in the progressive-internationalist camp (ANC, 2012). The 2017 resolutions refer to the “continued ideological contestation” between, on the one hand, “reactionary forces” and “progressive forces” on the other (ANC, 2017). For the ANC, the emerging Southern powers are important partners in this contestation. The 2017 resolution notes: the “emergence of growing economic powers, especially China, India and Brazil have a perspective that is informed by their respective struggles. They are inclined to acting multilaterally and therefore share our commitment to rebuilding and transforming all the institutions of global governance” (ANC, 2017, p. 58).

The development agenda has featured consistently in the ANC resolutions. The decision to establish a development agency was first mooted and agreed upon at the 2007 ANC national conference. The Partnership was considered an instrument to achieve the MDGs and to make Africa less dependent on external assistance. In addition, in 2009 the ANC also changed the name of the Department of Foreign Affairs to International Relations and Cooperation. This gave greater clarity to the department's mandate. The statement in 2009 by the minister of international relations and cooperation said that,

The name change moves from the premise that foreign policy is based upon and is indeed an advancement of our domestic priorities at an international level. [...] A]s South Africa seeks to attain its foreign policy objectives it should simultaneously pursue a developmental agenda both in the continent and the developing world.

This development agenda can only succeed to the extent to which strategic and mutual developmental cooperation is built with countries of the continent, the developing and the developed world [...]. T]he renaming [...] is a deliberate decision on the part of government to ensure a holistic approach to foreign relations – which reflects the development agenda. (DIRCO [Department of International Relations and Cooperation South Africa], 2009, para. 4, 8)

The 2012 ANC Mangaung conference dedicated a section to South-South Cooperation. The promotion of SSC was essential to the ANC's vision of a better world, and the ANC was committed to strengthening it. The resolutions also mentioned the BRICS Bank (renamed the New Development Bank, once it was established), which the conference regarded as benefiting SSC, including African development.

At its most recent conference in 2017, the ANC reiterated in its International Relations resolutions that “Africa and its development remains the central objective of the ANC's international perspective and policy, with the African Renaissance remaining a key policy objective” (ANC, 2017). While it did not mention SSC specifically, the ANC conference resolved that the NDB “must be used effectively to provide an alternative Global Financing Mechanism”, and that the ANC should discuss with the other BRICS how the G20 could be better used to promote a “progressive agenda” (ANC, 2017, p. 55).

Interestingly, for the first time, the 2017 International Relations resolution also included that the government should maintain its current observer status in the OECD rather than seek to take full membership of the organisation.<sup>14</sup> While this has been the government's

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14 A number of other developing countries, on the other hand, are pursuing OECD membership (or have already joined), such as Chile and Colombia.

position – that it will engage with the OECD processes but not seek to join the organisation – this was now also affirmed in the ANC documents.

South Africa will hold its sixth national elections in 2019. With the ANC certain to be returned to power there is unlikely to be a significant shift on the positions on global development matters that came to define South Africa's position in the last few years.

Historically, on the global stage South Africa has often been regarded as an important interlocutor, acting as a bridge between North and South, and helping to resolve impasses (Alden & Schoeman, 2015; Klingebiel, 2018; Sidiropoulos, 2017). However, its ideological orientation and aversion to American (and Western) interventionism has been a constant, which became more prominent under the Zuma presidency. Mbeki's African renaissance was aimed at regaining dignity and independence for the continent, while his vision behind a G8 of the South (Landsberg, 2010) was about creating a grouping that would counterbalance or act as a counterpoint to the North. Under the Zuma presidency, BRICS became the counterbalance to the North.

South Africa's quiet distancing from the GPEDC process should be seen in this context and contrasted with the engagement by the African Union and key African states such as Nigeria and Kenya (see below). This was an illustration of the less nuanced foreign policy that characterised the Zuma years where the potential value of contributing to shaping debates in all fora that have an impact on Africa's development and a voice on the global stage was not fully appreciated; or the importance of forging alliances to shift the focus of debates.

### 3.4 Participation in global development fora

From its early enunciations on the need for an African renaissance and its seminal contribution to the adoption of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), and subsequently the establishment of the Coordinating Agency of the same name, South Africa has identified the imperative of African development as central to many of its international engagements. South Africa is interested in both the substance of the global development debate as well as its architecture. The latter is part of the country's vision for a fairer global architecture reflecting the changes in power relations and associated ideational precepts of political, economic and developmental systems.

As such, South Africa has been active in the various platforms focusing on development – from the OECD-DAC High Level Forums (culminating in Busan) in the 2000s to the UN-led processes on Sustainable Development (including the hosting of the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002), Financing for Development, the Development Cooperation Forum, and the G20's Development Working Group. Development has also featured in the agenda of two clubs to which South Africa belongs: IBSA and the BRICS.

This section will examine briefly South Africa's engagement in a number of global development structures. These include initiatives by formal institutions such as the UN, the OECD and the GPEDC, as well as by the G20 through its Development Working Group, IBSA and the BRICS.

The table below maps out the lead departments in the South African government that engage in the various global development forums:

<b>Table 1: Global development forums and South African government departments responsible</b>	
<b>International Forums</b>	<b>SA government department responsible</b>
OECD-DAC High Level Forums & OECD	Treasury
GPEDC	DIRCO
<i>UN bodies/processes</i>	
FfD	DIRCO & Treasury
UN HLPF (SDGs)	DIRCO
UNDCF	DIRCO
<i>Club governance</i>	
G20	Sherpa track (DIRCO), finance (Treasury)
IBSA	DIRCO
BRICS	DIRCO
Source: Author	

These can be divided into three broad groups. In the first group (OECD-DAC), the roots of South Africa’s participation lie in its status as a recipient of development aid in the post-1994 period.

The second group comprises the various UN processes: the UNDCF, the FfD and the SDGs. The third group is the G20, and specifically its Development Working Group, although other G20 working groups also touch on development issues; IBSA, and the BRICS.

### 3.4.1 The OECD processes

Before discussing South Africa’s engagement in the DAC it is important to note that the country is part of the enhanced engagement, or outreach, of the OECD which includes four other countries – China, India, Indonesia and Brazil – and which began in 2007. Much of this engagement relates to domestic issues, such as macro-economic policies and structural reforms; however, South Africa has worked with the OECD on its regional initiatives in Sub-Saharan Africa, including as vice co-chair of the NEPAD-OECD African Investment Initiative, while South Africa is active in the SADC Regional Investment Policy Framework and the OECD AfDB (African Development Bank Group) initiative to support business integrity and anti-bribery efforts in Africa. South Africa is also an associate of the BEPS (base erosion and profit-shifting) project. The Treasury is the lead department in this relationship. South Africa has chosen not to join the OECD, although other middle-income countries such as Chile and Colombia have done so.

**OECD-DAC High Level Forums (from Rome to Busan):** The lead department in South Africa in this forum was the Treasury, as it has been responsible since 1994 for the receipt and management of incoming aid from development partners. Its tracking system (Development Co-operation Information System) maintained by the International Development Cooperation Chief Directorate in the Treasury had been commended in this regard. The post-apartheid Treasury built up a formidable reputation in managing public finances and steering the country to macro-economic stability. Both the staff and the political leadership were highly regarded internationally. This reputation provided the Treasury and the country with the platform to advance and voice African concerns in

various international platforms. It was also uniquely placed to play a leadership role among African states in galvanising them to be more active and more prepared to engage on the DAC agenda. It was very clear for Treasury officials at the time that African states which were the biggest constituency in the DAC discussions with recipient countries did not speak with one voice, nor were they sufficiently prepared for the content of the discussions, thus weakening their position. South Africa thus proposed that the Africa group meet in advance of the DAC meetings to identify and develop a common position on issues on the agenda. The meetings with the DAC members could thus be used as fora for highlighting and communicating issues that were important for African states in general. This process of preparation among African states took the form of both formal meetings and informal consultations when there was not time for a proper formal meeting in advance. In the pre-OECD preparatory meetings, smaller African countries were quite vocal but preferred that in the meetings with the DAC, South Africa speak on behalf of the Africa group. However, over time countries that have retained an active engagement in the global development processes, including the GPEDC (Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, and Tanzania) became increasingly more confident in the DAC meetings having shorn off their concerns about potential victimisation by the donors. There was a recognition that if they articulated their positions and argued them effectively, there was more respect from the donors rather than victimisation. Their greater engagement also translated into other fora such as the UN Development Cooperation Forum (Interview with former National Treasury official, May 2018).

Today, nearly two decades later, there is an institutionalised framework for developing and articulating the African position in international fora, via the NEPAD Agency, the AU and the APDev (African Platform for Development Effectiveness; see more detail below). The initial role South Africa played in coordinating African countries in the DAC and its contribution in creating institutions that could ensure continuity and a system was significant.

One of the notable achievements in the process of ensuring a greater voice for African states was realised at the HLF in Accra in 2008. At the Paris meeting of the HLF in 2005 most sessions had been chaired by the OECD-DAC. The same applied to the working groups. At Accra, South Africa and the other African states argued forcefully for an equal split in the chairing of sessions, as well as of speakers. Members of the OECD were initially shocked by this request; they then acceded but the United States argued that the developing country chairs should be suggested by the DAC. This was roundly opposed by developing countries. The OECD relented and, on many issues over time, the Africa bloc found support among the more liberal development partners in the DAC, such as the Nordics, the Germans and the Dutch. By the time of the Busan HLF, African states had found their voice (Interview with former National Treasury official).<sup>15</sup>

In the lead-up to Busan, South Africa was part of the drafting committee of the Busan outcomes document. Although it was not in the same league as China and India in terms of its development cooperation, it had nevertheless built up a significant international profile since 1994 and was highly regarded. This respect for the role that South Africa

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15 Interestingly, among the emerging countries Brazil was the most vocal in those discussions in the mid-2000s, while the Chinese were silent, and the Indians not very engaged.

could play was a result of the way in which South Africa had conducted itself from the mid-1990s – at the political level from the president down, there was a strong political vision and dynamic engagement on the global debates. This was augmented by civil servant champions in the various departments who had the political backing and felt empowered to drive engagement and issues at the technical level in these meetings.

By the second decade of the 21st century, much of that momentum as well as the personalities that had been instrumental in providing political support and had a high international standing (Thabo Mbeki, Trevor Manuel, Tito Mboweni) had been lost. This coincided roughly with South Africa's gradual disengagement from the development debates taking place in the forums that were heirs to the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness. It also coincided with South Africa's joining the BRICS club, and its prioritisation of this relationship in its foreign policy.

**From Busan to Mexico City:** At Busan and in the period immediately after that, South Africa did not follow the lead of China, India and Brazil who preferred to keep their distance from the global partnership discussions. Instead South Africa saw this forum and its outcomes as an opportunity to advance the Africa Agenda, an evergreen element of its international engagements (Besharati, 2013a).

As the first Steering Committee of the Global Partnership was being established, South Africa chose not to take up a seat, citing capacity constraints linked to its aim to finalise the establishment of the SA Development Partnership Agency. It did, however, help to broker the representation of middle-income countries on the Steering Committee. Indonesia was selected as co-chair and Peru took up the other seat reserved for donor-recipient countries. South Africa's involvement during that period included supporting the calls from Africa for greater accountability (Besharati, 2013a).

South Africa's engagement on GPEDC-related matters in the immediate post-Busan period was also reflected in the statement by the then deputy minister of finance, Nhlanhla Nene at the 2012 third High Level UNDCF in New York:

[A]n appropriate mix and weighting for all actors will lead the Global Partnership overseeing the future of development cooperation. Past inequality and lopsided negotiation platforms will themselves be eradicated as the South and North establish a 'new, inclusive and representative Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation'. (National Treasury, South Africa, 2012, p. 5)

This statement recognised the role that the GPEDC could play in addressing the divisions and the development challenges of the past. It also reflected the pragmatic approach that Treasury adopted on such matters compared to the more political approach of DIRCO.

A review of the minutes of the Steering Committee of the Global Partnership since its inception reveals a steady reduction in South Africa's participation as an observer. At the third SC meeting, South Africa attended as an observer and was represented by a treasury official. Its key intervention was to welcome Mexico's intention to put on the agenda of the first GPEDC ministerial which it was hosting, greater emphasis on the middle-income countries, their development challenges and their role in development partnerships. South Africa saw this as an opportunity to engage in an international dialogue on development more broadly. At the fourth meeting in October 2013, embassy staff from South Africa's

mission in Washington DC attended, and embassy staff also attended the fifth meeting in Abuja in February 2014, in the run-up to Mexico City.

Although South Africa was not actively engaged in the preparations for the Mexico meeting in 2014, it attended the ministerial and did not follow Brazil, India and China in their boycott of the HLM. However, that was the last time. The country did not send a ministerial delegation. By Mexico City, South Africa was “bowing out”, as one SA official close to the process at the time, noted (Interview with former NT official, 2018).

At the HLM held in Nairobi in 2016, there was no official SA presence. The only representative was a local government official. South Africa explained its absence and limited engagement as a consequence of its limited human resources, although the view has been expressed to the author by a mid-level diplomat that the post-Busan process is not relevant for SSC (Interview with SA diplomat, 2018). However, South Africa has to manage a balancing act between retaining solidarity with its African partners on the continent, who have been active in the process (both the continental institutions and individual countries), and the big “Southern providers” (China, India and Brazil) who are its partners in the BRICS and which it regards as a grouping able to shift the existing global power configuration in the favour of the South.

### 3.4.2 UN processes

South Africa has always been unequivocal in stating that the “United Nations remains the most inclusive and transparent means to advance development cooperation”. South Africa considers ECOSOC (United Nations Economic and Social Council) the “principal body for coordination, policy review, policy dialogue and recommendations on economic and social development [...]” (IGD [Institute for Global Dialogue], 2013, p. 8).

South Africa’s major entry into the UN global sustainable development arena was its hosting of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in 2002. It was a high-water mark for the country’s diplomacy (Interview with UN official, May 2018). An important outcome of the WSSD was the integration of the three pillars of sustainable development (social, economic and environmental), with the country arguing strongly that poverty eradication needed to be at the heart of sustainable development (Schroeder, 2002, p. 34; Mashabane, 2018, p. 404).

South Africa’s role on development matters in the United Nations has been projected often through its holding of various positions, most notably as chair of the G77 + China (2006 and 2015). In 2006 as chair of the G77 + China, South Africa “forcefully challenged” the US’s efforts to water down the development proposals in the World Summit Outcome document, while a decade later it played a constructive role in ensuring Agenda 2030 was adopted by consensus (Mashabane, 2018, p. 405). In a book on the inside story of the negotiations of the SDGs, the authors note that “the chair of the G77 is perhaps the second most important multilateral post after the President of the UN General Assembly” because members in the UNGA usually look to the G77 to draft initial resolutions (Kamau et al., 2018, p. 10).

Earlier, in January 2013, the UNGA president appointed South Africa and Ireland to coordinate preparations for the Special Event scheduled for September 2013 to follow up

on efforts made towards achieving the MDGs that had been agreed at the High Level UNGA plenary meeting on the MDGs in 2010.

South Africa has been elected twice to serve as a member of the UN's ECOSOC (2004-06 and 2013-15). With regard to its latter term on ECOSOC, South Africa saw the period leading up to the post-2015 agenda as a crucial one and regarded ECOSOC's role in coordinating the various processes as key (IGD, 2013, p. 8). South Africa has always advocated for the strengthening and further reform of ECOSOC so that it is better placed to tackle global challenges and the needs of developing countries (IGD, 2013, p. 8).

South Africa was a strong proponent of the MDGs and what the Millennium Summit and Declaration promised, seeing it as carrying the potential to create a better life for all. President Mbeki said at the time: "The fundamental challenge that faces this Millennium Summit is that, credibly, we must demonstrate the will to end poverty and underdevelopment" (Zondi, 2017, p. 129). South Africa also championed the development of African capacity to generate its own data to monitor the MDGs. Nevertheless, a deficit in data to inform policy and track the SDGs continues to be a challenge for many African states in the post-2015 landscape.

Although South Africa worked constructively on the adoption of the SDGs, it also argued strongly that the work of the MDGs still needs to be completed. The new set of goals and indicators should not supersede the MDG targets where these remain unfulfilled. Together with the other African countries, South Africa advocated that the "unfinished business" of the MDGs needs to be completed. At the 2013 UNGA, President Zuma set out South Africa's key concerns for both the content and the rules of a post-2015 agenda. These included the need to fully implement the MDGs and that this should remain a priority in the post-2015 landscape. He again emphasised that all three dimensions of sustainable development should be integrated: "eradication of poverty through economic development, social development and environmental sustainability" ((Zuma, 2013, para. 18). In addition, South Africa supported the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities between developed and developing economies. Zuma argued this in the context of what he explained as the "tendency to attempt to delegate some of these historical responsibilities to new emerging economies in South". He said this was "unacceptable and unworkable as such emerging nations have their own historical challenges and backlogs to deal with" (Zuma, 2013, para. 27).

South Africa has at all times been very vocal and well-respected in New York and the issues which it has constantly advocated are more policy space for developing countries especially on trade issues and more broadly systemic issues. Zuma's 2013 UNGA address reiterated the importance of allowing individual states to have the requisite policy space to tackle their development needs according to their particular circumstances and priorities. He also cautioned that the introduction of green economy and clean technology as priorities in the post-2015 global debates were potentially huge non-tariff barriers (Zuma, 2013).

However, South Africa has always had to walk a tightrope in terms of balancing its role as representing the Global South or African position and its own views and interests, such as on human rights where it is not always *ad idem* with other members of the G77. In the UN, observers have noted that it treads carefully so as not to alienate traditional allies in both groupings. South Africa's diplomatic challenge has been not to undermine the



positions of the various groupings it forms part of – from IBSA and the BRICS to the G77 and Africa. It adopts a strong African position within the G77, while in the Africa group it displays more of a G20 mindset, that of an emerging power (Interview with UNDESA [United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs] official, 2018). Masters argues that ahead of the post-2015 negotiations, South Africa did not have a “clear or settled role conception”. However, as these progressed the “language increasingly reflected a focus on the linkage between South Africa and South-South cooperation” (Masters, 2017, p. 163).

South Africa was the co-facilitator of the UN Financing for Development Forum in 2017 together with Belgium. The first Forum in 2016 had produced a procedural text that had not covered all the chapters of the Addis Ababa Action Plan (AAAP). When South Africa took over the co-facilitation together with Belgium they aimed to get agreement on a substantive text in the UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Financing for Development (IATF) on financing for development that focused on a balanced approach to all chapters in the AAAP. South Africa believed that, if the forum was to advance development, the follow-up meetings could not only focus on certain elements but ignore others. Furthermore, South Africa’s position in the negotiations was that this forum should not focus only on ODA commitments; the FfD was not about measurement but about financing. South Africa also stood firm against efforts by some countries to push the Busan principles into the document. The discussion on trade was also difficult. There had been a number of commitments in the AAAP, including those on strengthening the multilateral trading system, facilitating international trade and promoting trade policy coherence. The IATF report was not able to significantly take these issues forward; rather, it resorted to the language that had been used in the AAAP. Overall, during South Africa’s co-facilitation, South Africa was keen on strengthening the IATF report so that it provided concrete recommendations to member states to speed up implementation.

In the UNDCF, South Africa has been measured, bringing balance and openness to many of the debates. South Africa has also been active on the UNDCF’s advisory board since its inception. The country also supported the initiative to have the UNDCF held before the HLPF on the SDGs as, since the HLPF’s establishment in 2013, it has been held after it in July when most people were on vacation. In 2018, the UNDCF was held in May. The UNDCF provides a policy space to talk about development cooperation and is currently the only space where the big Southern players will engage on development matters. Ironically, in the UNDCF South Africa is regarded as supportive of the GPEDC, not opposed to it (Interview with UNDESA official, 2018). The big question is whether the large emerging powers will be willing to allocate more resources to the UNDCF for it to be able to undertake more expansive studies on mutual accountability and transparency in the area of development cooperation. Brazil had indicated its willingness to provide more resources to the UNDCF; with the election of Jair Bolsonaro to the Brazilian presidency, however, this commitment is now uncertain.

There are opportunities for bridge-building between the GPEDC, the emerging powers and the UNDCF while South Africa’s history of diplomatic engagement in these fora provides an opportunity for it to play such a role again. For South Africa to do so, though, will require it to develop a better understanding of the roles of others and of the “nuances within the geo-political construct of the North and South” (Masters, 2017, p. 165).

### 3.4.3 Clubs

#### **The G20**

South Africa is the only African member of the G20, a club established at summit-level in the aftermath of the global financial crisis of 2008. Since then, the G20 has positioned itself as the premier global economic governance forum, that includes systemically important countries from both developed and developing world. Taking into account that the global rules, whether these are on trade or banking or financial regulation, tend to favour developed economies – and thus may act as obstacles to developing countries realising their development potential – South Africa's engagement in the G20 is very much part of its foreign policy and development agenda. In this regard, it advocated and supported the decision made during the Korean presidency, to include the AU and NEPAD as observers in the G20 process.<sup>16</sup>

South Africa is part of the Emerging Market Economies (EMEs) caucus (including Russia) that meets as a group in the G20, in the same way that the G7 do. Argentina has chaired the caucus since 2017 and sought to ensure that the meeting provides sufficient time for proper strategising and coordination among the EMEs in advance of the G20 meetings. For South Africa, many of the issues on the G20 agenda have a different impact depending on whether they are seen through the prism of developing or developed countries, whether it is on the digital economy and the fourth industrial revolution or the impact of aggressive monetary policies by developed countries on the economic performance of developing countries. Better coordination among the EMEs is therefore critical because the G7 already have established mechanisms and practices of coordination of their positions and agendas.

The paper will focus on the Development Working Group, the finance track's focus on development issues; and the G20 initiative, Compact with Africa, which was rolled out during the German presidency in 2017.

#### *G20 Development Working Group*

Although the challenge of development was implied in the 2009 G20 Framework for Strong, Sustainable and Balanced Growth, it was at the June 2010 G20 Toronto Summit that this focus was formalised, through the establishment of the Development Working Group (DWG). The decision at Toronto was motivated by the recognition of the necessity to narrow the development gap and reduce poverty if strong, sustainable and balanced growth and a more robust and resilient economy for all were to be achieved (G20, 2010a). They also singled out the impact of policy actions on low-income countries.

The DWG generated a multi-year action plan on development, which was adopted at the November 2010 summit in Seoul. The Seoul Development Consensus for Shared Growth identified nine pillars of growth: infrastructure, private investment and job creation, human resource development, trade, financial inclusion, growth with resilience, food security, domestic resource mobilisation, and knowledge sharing (G20, 2010b). Each of

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16 See the paper by Nnadozie and Grant Makokera (2014).

these were further elaborated into a series of initiatives in the form of a multi-year action plan. The Development Working Group was tasked with monitoring the progress on these issues and to report back to the country sherpas.<sup>17</sup>

Later that year at the Seoul Summit, the Seoul Development Consensus and the Multi-Year Action Plan were adopted. South Africa has been co-chair of the working group in the Sherpa track since its inception and played an important role in that forum, ensuring that there is commitment to the DWG and continuation from one presidency to the next. The Seoul Consensus initially focused on nine pillars.<sup>18</sup> During Russia's presidency in 2013 these were consolidated into five areas: infrastructure, domestic resource mobilisation (DRM), financial inclusion and remittances, food security and nutrition, and human resource development (HRD). During the Turkish presidency in 2015, the DWG adopted the G20 Inclusive Business Framework that aims to support the private sector's role in development. This was therefore added to the DWG agenda. The St Petersburg Development Outlook in 2013 mandated the DWG to prepare a comprehensive accountability report every three years. The first was presented in 2013 and an accountability framework was agreed upon in 2014. There is also an annual progress report. The DWG also actively seeks to engage with non-G20 members, especially LICs. The accountability report in addition assesses the outreach of the DWG to other stakeholders.

Combatting illicit financial flows (IFFs) has been an important priority for South Africa both through continental bodies (former President Mbeki chaired the AU panel on IFFs), but also through the G20. South Africa was instrumental in pushing for the World Customs Organisation to prepare a report on IFFs channelled via trade misinvoicing. This initiative occurred under the DWG track, and met with resistance from some G20 members. Some members believed the matter should be handled under the finance track. The SA Treasury has supported DIRCO's push to keep the matter in the DWG. Both see addressing trade misinvoicing as being crucial to the development debate. The WCO report was tabled at the last meeting of the DWG in September 2018. While there is a clear finance dimension to misinvoicing, DIRCO's concern in moving issues to the finance track has always been that the focus on development impact might be lost.

In 2016, when the G20 action plan for Agenda 2030 was adopted under the Chinese presidency, the DWG was mandated to act as a coordinating body and policy resource on sustainable development across the G20 (G20, 2016, p. 87).

The DWG operates on the Sherpa track, which is managed by DIRCO. There are a number of overlaps between the DWG agenda, the finance track (managed by the National Treasury) and other working groups of the G20, although the coordination has been ramped up. Indeed, the accountability framework of the DWG includes establishing stronger linkages with other working groups to ensure better policy coherence on development across G20 workstreams. These work streams include the finance track, in particular on infrastructure, DRM, financial inclusion and remittances; the Employment

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17 High-level diplomats representing governments at G20 gatherings, facilitating negotiations in the run-up to the annual leaders' summit.

18 Infrastructure, human resource development, trade, private investment and job creation, food security, growth with resilience, financial inclusion, domestic resource mobilisation, and knowledge sharing.

Working Group; and the Energy Sustainability Working Group (ESWG) (G20 Development Working Group, 2015, p. 2).

### *G20 finance track*

The SA Treasury represents the country in the finance track. South Africa co-chairs the infrastructure and investment working group in the finance track with Germany (the working group was established in 2014). Infrastructure has been a strong component of the finance track. Most recently under the Argentine presidency, progress was made on developing infrastructure as an asset class (third meeting of Finance ministers and central bank governors, 20-21 July 2018, Buenos Aires), an objective that had also been highlighted as important by NEPAD in its focus on infrastructure for Africa. The finance track has also been working on a set of G20 Principles for the Infrastructure Project Preparation Phase. These are intended to help “deliver a pipeline of well-prepared and bankable projects that are attractive to private investors by improving assessments of project rationale, options appraisal, commercial viability, long-term affordability, and deliverability” (Ministry of Finance, Japan, 2018, para. 4). For South Africa, project preparation is an area that has been neglected in the discussion on infrastructure. For example, the country motivated strongly for this to be an essential part of the services offered by the New Development Bank established by the BRICS forum.

Another area that is relevant to Africa and development in the finance track is financial inclusion. This has also been part of the DWG mandate. South Africa is a co-chair of the subgroup on financial inclusion data and measurement<sup>19</sup> of the Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion, which was launched in December 2010 after the Seoul G20 summit where financial inclusion featured prominently in the Development Consensus. South Africa has also urged the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to create a facility that meets the specific needs of countries in fragile situations that require financial support and have limited capacity to advance reforms to restore macroeconomic stability (IMF, 2016).

Apart from financial inclusion South Africa has also been very active in the G20 deliberations on tax. For Africa the ability to increase domestic revenue to the fiscus is a big challenge and focus in recent years. South Africa has been particularly successful in drawing attention to the impact of illicit financial flows on developing countries, particularly on African economies and development. South Africa was also active in the debates to tackle base erosion and profit-shifting (BEPS) in the G20 (see also above under OECD).

South Africa is co-chair of the Task Force on Tax and Development. As a member of the Steering Group of the Inclusive Framework on BEPS, South Africa has emphasised the importance of capacity-building support in order to address the full range of challenges in developing countries.

The Treasury's priorities in the finance track are infrastructure (specifically, infrastructure as an asset class, the notion of quality infrastructure and fiscal sustainability related to

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19 There are four other subgroups, i) regulations and standard-setting bodies; ii) SME finance; iii) financial consumer protection and financial literacy; iv) markets and payment systems. The GPMI is not limited to G20 members, and Kenya and Nigeria assisted with the work of the sub-group on principles and SSBs.

projects), debt sustainability; and working with DIRCO on IFFs through the sherpa track. In the discussions around reform of the Bretton Woods institutions, the Treasury's focus for the upcoming IMF General Review of quotas in 2019 is to preserve quota and voice for Africa (Interview with SA National Treasury official, 2018).

### *G20 Compact with Africa*

South Africa has been part of the Compact with Africa, an initiative proposed by the German G20 Presidency in the Finance Track and endorsed by the G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors in Baden-Baden, Germany in March 2017. Any African country can join the Compact. Countries that voluntarily join the initiative undertake a number of commitments to improve their macroeconomic, business and financing frameworks so as to raise private investment and increase efficient public investment in infrastructure. Partners and international organisations (the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the African Development Bank) in turn also undertake to support these reforms through technical assistance that also contributes to lowering the level of risk for private investments by enhancing economic and financial conditions and strengthening institutions. The South Africa Treasury is co-chair of the African Advisory Group (AAG) of the Compact, together with Germany. The G20 as a platform and with the significant convening power of Germany provides leadership and political support that should enable private sector investment to be leveraged. So far, 12 African countries have joined the Compact and a number of G20 members are country partners (largely the developed members – China and India, for example, do not actively participate in it). Infrastructure was the initial focus of the initiative, but this is likely to expand to include, for example, manufacturing. The Treasury regards the Compact as reflecting a shift in the operations of the G20. The AAG focuses on practical outputs, not only a policy reform agenda, and there could be lessons for Asia. Although the initiative is barely two years old, countries are displaying ownership of the commitments made, unlike in the case of structural adjustment programmes that were externally imposed. The Compact realistically seeks to address the trend that ODA is declining and that financing for development will increasingly have to come from the private sector. While recognising that there are challenges to the roll-out of regional projects, South Africa (and the AU and NEPAD, which both serve on the AAG) have indicated that regional projects should be considered in the future. The Compact's approach, which includes a regular progress review, is becoming a vehicle for greater accountability of the international organisations and also encourages greater coordination among them (Interview with SA NT official, 2018).

### **Other clubs**

South Africa regards the IBSA and BRICS fora as important South-South Cooperation groupings, and “models for development cooperation in a South-South context” (IGD, p. 7). In 2004, IBSA established the Hunger and Poverty Alleviation Facility (IBSA Trust Fund), which was granted the MDG Award for its various successful and innovative projects in countries such as Burundi, Cambodia, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau and Palestine. The fund which had cumulative contributions amounting to USD 35.1 million, according to its 2018 report, worked with 19 partner states, nearly two-thirds of which were least-developed countries. The mandate of the fund is to “support projects on a

demand-driven basis through partnerships with local governments, national institutions and implementing partners” (IBSA Fund, 2018, p. 2).

Although IBSA has lost some of its political clout since South Africa joined the BRICS (it has, for instance, not had a summit since 2011), there continues to be work at the senior officials' level. In 2018, IBSA adopted a declaration on SSC (see above).

The BRICS is the preeminent South-South club for South Africa since it joined in 2011. In a speech in 2012, South Africa's international relations and cooperation minister highlighted that its membership had three objectives: to advance South Africa's national interests; to promote its regional integration programme and related continental infrastructure programme; and to partner with key players in the South on issues related to global governance and its reform (DIRCO [Department of International Relations and Cooperation, South Africa], 2012). Then president Zuma repeatedly made the point that the BRICS' countries major savings pool could be a source of funding for African investments in infrastructure and manufacturing (Sidiropoulos et al., 2018a), p. 2). It is clear that for South Africa the BRICS provides an opportunity to leverage financing for Africa's infrastructure development in the priorities set out by NEPAD and Agenda 2063. The New Development Bank is another important instrument for this objective. The African Regional Centre was established in Johannesburg in 2017 but the Bank's membership has not yet expanded beyond the five initial members to enable it to lend to other developing countries.

The BRICS-Africa cooperation has still some way to evolve, although each of these countries has individual bilateral cooperation with many African countries.

The global development agenda and the structures created to manage it form an important dimension of South Africa's foreign policy priorities. The country has played an active role in the most important development structures at various times and in various forms since the end of apartheid. It has recognised the impactful role that a host country can play in global summits when it hosted the WSSD. Equally it has selected to chair important groupings of the Global South at critical junctures in global development debates. While respecting the legitimacy of agreements made in the formal multilateral bodies, South Africa has also been pragmatic in recognising that smaller informal clubs can play a significant role in advancing particular issues, especially where agreement among a few systemically important countries will make all the difference.

Thus while it maintains that the North has a responsibility to meet its commitment of 0.7 per cent of GNI to ODA, it has argued very forcefully in the G20 for the need to remove the binding constraints such as rules that enable illicit financial flows, or for inputs such as instruments to facilitate project preparation in infrastructure construction.

The G20 as a smaller grouping of systemically important countries creates more possibilities for South Africa to make more substantive inputs and influence debates than for example, the big multilateral settings such as the United Nations, where bloc politics usually play an important role in the debates. Nevertheless, South Africa uses the various platforms it participates in to complement each other. It has been consistent across platforms in highlighting the themes of illicit financial flows and domestic resource mobilisation as key components to overcome, in the first case and achieve in the second, if African development is to be realised. It has argued for greater equity in international

organisations and their reform, and prefers not to be a rule-taker, while emphasising that the developed world should not renege on its development commitments.

Because of the multiplicity of global forums that deal with global development and different ministries that are responsible for leading in certain platforms, there is always the risk of mixed messages and institutional inertia. In the South African context, the National Treasury was and still is responsible for the management and oversight of incoming traditional aid. Therefore, it has been the primary interface with the OECD-DAC partners and the various processes that are linked to more effective aid. It was the Treasury that also represented South Africa at the Busan High Level Forum. The Treasury has also had a constructive relationship with OECD and has led South Africa's inclusion in the OECD's Enhanced Engagement with key emerging powers. DIRCO leads on the sherpa track of the G20 and on UN processes. It is sensitive to the politics of the Southern political groupings it is part of – Africa, the BRICS, and the G77 + China. The United Nations is clearly a more political body where government representatives of all countries have a political perspective. In the GPEDC by contrast, most of the actors are development officials. While in some countries the political and development perspectives are an integral part of their foreign policy, the tension between the two cannot be eradicated.

#### **4 Resonance or dissonance in Africa?**

Since South Africa's return to the international community in 1994, the country has emphasised its African identity and that the continent lay at the centre of its foreign policy, as did its goal to increase the voice of Africa in global fora. This was illustrated in the preceding section of the paper. In the section that follows, we focus on how African states have sought to increase their voice in multilateral development fora and developed platforms and structures to advance development on the continent. First, as discussed above, in the early 2000s Africa established an institution that was intended to be the continent's development agency, NEPAD; second, and under NEPAD, it established a development platform that would enable coordination and the articulation of common priorities through a united voice: the African Platform for Development Effectiveness; third, the AU adopted Agenda 2063 (Africa's 50-year vision for 2063) in 2013 that strengthened the conceptual coherence of Africa's priorities and provided a vision for the future<sup>20</sup>; fourth, through individual African countries and through its institutions it began to play a stronger role in global multilateral negotiations.

These developments have enabled Africa to exercise more agency, using instruments to take forward a more cohesive strategy to advance their developmental interests.

Each of the four points above will be briefly discussed below.

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20 Africa has produced many continental plans since decolonisation; however, the initiatives of the 2000s are different in that they have an institutional home, they are exploring ways (and may have part of the means and the plans) to finance them from within Africa, and a number of African countries are experiencing growth and rising incomes.

## 4.1 The NEPAD Agency

The African renaissance idea of the late 1990s and early 2000s led to the establishment in 2001 of the New Partnership for Africa's Development. Its founding members were South Africa, Nigeria, Algeria, Senegal and Egypt. The following year, the AU endorsed its adoption as a programme of the AU. In 2010 it was converted into the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency as an outcome of the decision to integrate it into the AU structures and processes. Finally, at the mid-year AU summit in 2018, it was formally converted into the AU Development Agency.

In his book “Africa's Critical Choices: A Call for a Pan-African Roadmap”, the long-serving chief executive of the NEPAD Agency, Ibrahim Mayaki, explains that the NEPAD idea of the founding fathers was “to take back the developmental leadership of the continent with a pan-African point of view to give the continent its own path and an equal footing in its dealings with its international partners” (Mayaki, 2018, p. 74).

From small beginnings, and while still facing funding constraints, the NEPAD Agency has grown in its role as the premier platform for African discussions on development and as a coordinator of African positions in global fora. The articulation of a new partnership and the establishment of the NEPAD Secretariat were accompanied by the transformation of the Organisation of African Unity to the African Union, while the APRM Secretariat, intended to focus on improving African governance, was an outgrowth of NEPAD and established in 2003.

NEPAD's role has been bolstered and mirrored by the growing confidence and engagement on these issues by African countries individually, supported by the phenomenal economic growth that many experienced in the mid-2000s which led to the moniker of “Africa Rising” or “Lions on the Move”. As the socio-economic arm of the AU, NEPAD's priorities are human capital development; regional integration, infrastructure and trade; industrialisation, science, technology and innovation; and natural resource governance and food security. Since the adoption of the AU's Agenda 2063, NEPAD serves as its implementing body.

Projecting a common voice provides a stronger front in global debates that have traditionally been dominated by the big players; however, the continent is economically and politically diverse, making it difficult to carry through continental decisions to the national level, depending on the specific interest of each country. This is often a challenge that faces South Africa in certain fora, where its specific interests may not be entirely consistent with those of other African countries.

### 4.1.1 Adopting common positions: the African Platform for Development Effectiveness

Starting from the Accra HLF in 2008, the process of a more coherent and united voice for African issues began to form. The Africa Platform for Development Effectiveness (APDev) was endorsed at the 15th AU Summit in July 2010 and launched in March 2011. Managed by the NEPAD Agency, its focus was on providing coordination for a common voice for Africa's development perspectives, including SSC, aid effectiveness, and capacity development that were the core focal areas of the Platform.



By the time of the Busan HLF in 2011 Africa for the first time had a common position on development effectiveness drawing on the outcomes of three regional meetings driven by the NEPAD Agency<sup>21</sup> under APDev and held in Pretoria, Tunis and Addis Ababa between March 2010 and September 2011.

This approach continued for other important global debates. The African Action Plan on Development Effectiveness<sup>22</sup> was adopted by the AU and its members in advance of the first High Level Meeting of the GPEDC in Mexico in April 2014. The action plan articulated among others the challenges faced by MICs, a broad definition of domestic resource mobilisation (going beyond tax), and the importance of regional organisations in development. It also proposed specific ideas to address them (NEPAD [New Partnership for Africa's Development], 2014).

In the build-up to the adoption of Agenda 2030, the AU summit in January 2014 adopted a Common African Position on the post-2015 Development Agenda (CAP). Africa and the rest of the developing world regarded these negotiations as a “unique opportunity to right the wrongs of the past and make any future development framework reflect the priorities and needs of the people most affected by poverty and inequality” (Nganje, 2017, p. 61).

The CAP grouped Africa's development priorities into six pillars (AU [African Union], 2014):

- Structural economic transformation and inclusive growth;
- science, technology and innovation;
- people-centred development;
- environmental sustainability natural resources management, and disaster risk management;
- peace and security; and
- finance and partnerships.

Formulating the Common Position was a difficult process. A number of issues that were to prove contentious in the UN process (both the Open Working Group (OWG) and the inter-governmental negotiations (IGN)) played themselves out in the African context as well. For example, the peace and security pillar in the CAP elicited opposition from a number of African states. There were different interpretations of what this meant. South Africa's interpretation, for example, was based on the notion of human security, while Rwanda and Uganda regarded this as referring to state security (Nganje, 2017, p. 75). SDG 16, which covered peace, justice and strong institutions, was equally contentious within the UN process. Overall, however, the African process was fairly consultative and inclusive with

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21 NEPAD, in its 2001 base framework, proposed that Africa “establish a forum of African countries so as to develop a common African position on ODA reform, and to engage with the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD and other partners in developing a charter underpinning the development partnership” (NEPAD [New Partnership for Africa's Development], 2001, para. 148).

22 The Action Plan was granted the status of official Global Partnership Initiative by the GPEDC. See <http://www.nepad.org/nepad-oncontinent/capacity-development-programme-south-africa>.

both state and non-state actors making inputs. There were also strong links with Agenda 2063 that had been developed earlier.

In line with the approach to build Africa-wide consensus in advance of the GPEDC HLM in Nairobi, the NEPAD Agency organised in September 2016 the Africa Regional Workshop on the GPEDC Post-Monitoring Results and Preparations for the 2nd High Level Meeting. More than 44 countries adopted the Key African Political Messages to the HLM2 that fed into the Nairobi Outcome Document. Some of the key messages regarding monitoring, aid dependency and flows, and an enabling environment for multi-stakeholders, were (OECD/GPP/GPEDC, 2016):

- Monitoring remained an important part of GPEDC and had the greatest potential to contribute to achieving Agenda 2063 and Agenda 2030.
- The Monitoring Framework should be aligned to the needs of the AU Agenda 2063 and Agenda 2030.
- The GPEDC should deepen the role of regional organisations in implementing and monitoring GPEDC commitments.
- Development partners should harmonise their data on African country systems, and commit to strengthening their data collection, analysis and dissemination capacities.
- Domestic resource mobilisation was the most sustainable form of funding Africa's development and thus African states were committed to deepening and strengthening DRM.
- Aid should be directed to productive sectors and economies.
- The 0.7 per cent of GNI pledge by traditional donors regarding ODA should not be compromised by covering humanitarian assistance.

These were similar points that had been made earlier in the discussions on the SDGs and the post-2015 agenda. The document also reaffirmed that the SSC agenda must be defined and led by the South, "including the definition of its delivery and monitoring framework" (OECD/GPP/GPEDC, 2016, p. 20). In Africa's case, the document went on that it should be framed and driven by African countries with the AU and regional economic communities, and a secondary, supportive role played by international partners. Africa also saw an essential role for SSC in deepening regional integration as a driver of the continent's transformational agenda (OECD/GPP/GPEDC, 2016).

There have been other instances where Africa has adopted a common position (on climate change and on UN Security Council reform). Common positions on their own do not ensure the continent's voice is stronger. It is also true that because the 54 states are so different, a common position helps to articulate shared priorities to guide negotiations but may be less able to shape outcomes or promote the continent's collective interest (Nganje, 2017, p. 68). However, by working on a common voice, Africa has been systematic in its articulation of its priorities in all the development fora and, while traction is not easy, persistence has brought some outcomes. In the negotiations on the SDGs, most Africans working through the G77 plus China stood their ground regarding Goal 16 on peace and security, which was key in ensuring that the G77 did not drop it and that the goal was eventually adopted (Kamau et al., 2018, p. 203).

In other cases, Africa was able to gain an extra seat on the GPEDC Steering Committee. NEPAD was successful in its call for RECs (regional economic communities) to participate in the GP monitoring exercise (NEPAD, n. d.).

## 4.2 Agenda 2063

A highly ambitious vision for the continent in 2063 was adopted by the AU in 2013. Agenda 2063, as it became known, identified seven aspirations for Africa to attain in the 50-year period of the programme and divided up the period into ten-year implementation periods with the first one running from 2014 to 2023. The seven aspirations were:

- A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development;
- an integrated continent, politically united and based on the ideals of pan-Africanism;
- an Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law;
- a peaceful and secure Africa;
- an Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, values and ethics;
- an Africa where development is people-driven, relying particularly on the potential of women and youth; and
- Africa as a strong and influential global partner.

The first ten-year implementation plan identifies specific goals and priorities for the first decade. It has developed a monitoring and evaluation framework and sets out the financing needs and possible sources. The sources for financing the ten-year needs range from government budgetary increases, pure commercial finance from both public and private sources/savings, including domestic capital markets, concessional loans, market price-based commercial loans, equity and other market-like instruments, foreign direct investment, portfolio investments by the private sector (debt, bonds, equity and other securities), and crowd sourcing (AU, 2015, p. 103).

While the African continent has endured countless visions for development since decolonisation, and while Agenda 2063 has been criticised as being overly ambitious and runs the risk of going the way of the Lagos Plan of Action (1980) (Author's notes from an African think tanks meeting at the South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA) on "Africa at the Table or on the Table", 28 November 2018), this vision is different because there is a more coherent institutional home to drive the agenda and there is in place a proper framework for monitoring progress linked to a greater diversity of financing mechanisms than existed four decades ago (Author's notes from an African think tanks meeting at SAIIA on "Africa at the Table or on the Table", 28 November 2018).

Many of the goals of Agenda 2063 are similar to those adopted in 2015 as the SDGs and Agenda 2030. A report prepared by UNECA in 2016 shows that 67 per cent of SDG indicators overlap strongly or weakly with 2063, while 69 per cent and 100 per cent of targets and goals respectively do the same (UNECA [United Nations Economic Commission for Africa], 2016, p. 96).

In January 2018, the AU and the United Nations signed a development framework setting out the conditions for cooperation between the two bodies, which includes joint activities and programmes for effective implementation, tracking and monitoring of and reporting on both agendas.

Following Agenda 2063, the AU also established a panel led by Rwanda's President Paul Kagame to reform the institution. The proposals were far-ranging, including converting the NEPAD Agency into the AU Development Agency and streamlining the Commission. The Southern African region (including South Africa) had expressed reservations about some of the proposals, while former president Mbeki argued that they would make the organisation much more technocratic (Onyango-Obbo, 2019).

### 4.3 Global voice and representation

African voice and participation have grown steadily in global development debates. The coordinating role of the AU and NEPAD in the preparation for global debates or initiatives has been key in this regard, but so too has been the active role that certain African states and individuals have played. In the section below, the paper discusses African involvement in the negotiations on the SDGs and the post-2015 development agenda, and the Global Partnership process.

#### 4.3.1 UN processes

The SDGs were negotiated by the Open Working Group comprising 70 members. Eleven African countries participated in the OWG: Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, Ghana, Benin, Kenya, Tanzania, Congo, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The OWG was co-chaired by Kenya's Macharia Kamau and Hungary's Csaba Korosi. The process of selecting the co-chair from the South was quite fraught with a number of developing countries (including Egypt) preferring Brazil. The reason for this is that most G77 + China countries believed that their interests would be better served by a co-chair from one of the emerging powers because they felt that African states (excluding South Africa) could be easily manipulated by the North. "Kenya was considered a Trojan horse for the Europeans and UNEP" (Kamau et al., 2018, p. 60). Nevertheless, Kenya was able to deal with the concerns raised and Kamau was nominated as co-chair by the G77.

The role that Kamau and Korosi played in driving the process of determining and adopting the SDGs, using a very open, transparent and inclusive process cannot be underestimated in ensuring a successful outcome and a set of goals that were accepted overwhelmingly across the board.<sup>23</sup> Far from being a Trojan horse, Ambassador Kamau managed the process with his co-chair in a fair and non-partisan manner ensuring that all views were heard and considered. It was equally significant that he was also made co-facilitator of the IGN process on the post-2015 development agenda by the President of UNGA, Uganda's foreign minister, after the OWG had completed its work.

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23 It has been documented in Kamau et al. (2018).

While in his position as co-chair and co-facilitator he was not representing Africa, his achievements were important in dispelling earlier myths that Africans could not be independent.

It is important to note that the IGN process on the post-2015 Development Agenda had three Africans in senior positions. The president of UNGA in 2015 was the Ugandan foreign minister, the co-facilitator was Kenyan and the chair of the G77 + China was South Africa. Kamau et al. remarked that “often negotiations get into trouble when the chair of the G77 has a different agenda than the co-chairs or co-facilitators” (Kamau et al., 2018, p. 219). This was not so in the case of South Africa and cooperation among the president, the co-facilitators and the G77 was at the “highest level” (Kamau et al., 2018, p. 219).

South Africa’s role as chair of the G77 + China was strategic as it led the group in both the post-2015 development agenda negotiations as well as in the Financing for Development process. South Africa supported the co-facilitators at the IGN in advocating that the SDG discussions (once they had been finalised in the OWG) would not be reopened during the IGN process, as this would have upset the “delicate political compromise” (Kamau et al., 2018, p. 221). South Africa also argued on behalf of the G77 that the post-2015 agenda had to respect the national policy space of members – a point that had been made by South Africa’s president Zuma as early as 2013.

Developing countries and Africa in particular were emphatic throughout the OWG process that the SDGs should not divert attention from the implementation of the MDGs and that there should be a direct link between the two, including the post-2015 development agenda. Common But Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR) was another area of emphasis which made it into the text.

In the OWG process, which as indicated above, was open to all UN members irrespective of whether they had a formal seat on the working group or not, African states displayed a mixture of progressive and conservative approaches to issues. Kamau et al. (2018) identify Kenya, Botswana, Ghana and South Africa among the former, especially on issues such as the green and the blue economy and renewable energy, while countries such as Uganda and Nigeria were far more conservative on LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) rights and sexual and reproductive health (Kamau et al., p. 110). Kamau et al. recount that, at key moments, countries such as South Africa, Botswana, Tanzania, Rwanda and Ethiopia were called on to support the chairs in keeping the momentum of the process going (Kamau et al., 2018, p. 158).

South Africa represented the G77 in the negotiations on FfD that led to the Addis Action Plan. South Africa emphasised from the outset in its interventions that this was a separate process and its scope needed to go beyond the discussion on financing the SDGs (Kamau et al., 2018, p. 232) – the same argument was made by Africa in the run-up the GPEDC HLM in Nairobi regarding the draft outcomes document.

Overall, the final FfD document, the Addis Ababa Action Plan, did not reflect some of the biggest concerns of African states and the G77 + China. CBDR was not as explicitly set out, neither was the need by developed countries to honour the 0.7 per cent of GNI commitments, or that climate financing had to be additional to ODA commitments. For South Africa, and many other developing countries, the debate on IFFs was also not reflected adequately in the outcomes, and the failure to agree to upgrade the UN Tax

Committee to an intergovernmental body was also a disappointment (Kamau et al., 2018, pp. 234-235).

#### 4.3.2 The GPEDC process

Since the establishment of the GPEDC, many African states and the African Union have participated in it and regarded it as an important platform for discussing development effectiveness. Egypt was the chair of the Post-Busan Interim Group (PBIG).<sup>24</sup> After Busan, Rwanda and Mali represented Africa in the PBIG and the African Union and its institutions were active in developing and projecting Africa's position in these discussions. Rwanda and the United Kingdom took the lead in finalising the indicators in the PBIG. These 10 indicators were approved in June 2012 at the final meeting of the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness (WP-EFF).

When the GPEDC was launched in mid-2012 Nigeria became one of the co-chairs together with Britain and Indonesia.<sup>25</sup> Chad was the other African country on the Steering Committee. The AU and NEPAD worked jointly to support the Post-Busan implementation and to consolidate and coordinate African views. At the 19th summit of the AU, it was agreed that the AU would request membership of the GPEDC (GPEDC [Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation], 2012).

In 2014 Malawi became co-chair with the Netherlands and Mexico. Egypt and the AU/NEPAD served on the Steering Committee. From 2015 Kenya also participated in the Steering Committee as host of the 2016 HLM. Uganda became one of the co-chairs after the 2016 HLM. The other two co-chairs were Bangladesh representing developing countries that were donors and recipients, and Germany representing donor countries. An African country has always been one of the co-chairs. The rotation of African countries is managed through the AU, as is the election to the GPEDC co-chairmanship.

The NEPAD Agency is a permanent member of the Steering Committee. The Agency is the official secretariat of the GPEDC in Africa. Having NEPAD sit on the Steering Committee provides stability in terms of content, rather than the constant rotation among African states which, while democratic, makes it extremely difficult to achieve continuity and a degree of expertise in the process. In 2016, Africa gained an extra seat on the Steering Committee. The continent now has four seats (one co-chair, AU/NEPAD, and two African countries).

NEPAD and the African continent are part of a number of Global Partnership Initiatives (GPIs) of the GPEDC.<sup>26</sup> In 2015, the Global Partnership Initiative on Results and Mutual Accountability (GPI R&MA) piloted the Programme on Enhanced Use of Country Results Frameworks (CRFs). The initiative aims to reinforce improved use of country results

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24 Egypt was also previously the co-chair of the WP-EFF.

25 Each of the co-chairs would represent a recipient country, a donor country, and a donor-recipient country.

26 The GPEDC's GPIs are voluntary initiatives led by national governments, civil society organisations, foundations, and members of the private sector, among others. They generate policy-relevant lessons and innovative solutions, sharing this knowledge to spur more effective development co-operation at the country, regional and global levels.

frameworks to measure the impact of development cooperation in line with National Development Plans (NDPs), Agenda 2063, and Agenda 2030. The enhanced use of CRFs drawn from NDPs is essential in linking the critical functions of planning, budgeting and implementation towards attaining sustainable developmental results.

Currently, the initiative has 10 African countries: Madagascar, Malawi, Benin, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda, Mozambique and Cameroon. Somalia requested to join as of 2018, which brings the total to eleven participating countries. The NEPAD Agency Capacity Development & Monitoring and Evaluation Divisions are collaborating to have a unified AU tracking and monitoring mechanism of development results for Agenda 2063 and Agenda 2030. In addition, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda and Uganda are among the ten pilot countries on enhanced effectiveness at country level that will feed into the Global Compendium of Good Practice (GPEDC, 2018).

The NEPAD Agency is currently conducting Development Finance Assessments and Integrated Financing Strategies and Plans (IFSPs) Training to African Countries to enhance capacities for effective mobilisation of sustainable development finance. Thus far, 20 senior officials from the Ministries of Finance, Planning and Budgeting of Benin, Malawi, Uganda, Madagascar and Mozambique have undergone this training aimed at adequate identification of flows, planning for sustainable financing of NDPs and Agenda 2063, as well as DRM enhancement.

Under the framework of the GPEDC, the NEPAD Agency and the UNDP Regional Service Centre for Africa are collaborating on the African South-South Cooperation Reporting Initiative. The programme aims to provide concrete evidence to inform policies and partnerships showing that South-South trade, partnerships and investments have the potential to accelerate improvements in social and industrial sectors through harnessing technology, knowledge and experience. This will help stimulate, foster and enable sustainable South-South investments for the achievement of NDPs and Agenda 2063.

Africans on the GPEDC Steering Committee have consistently highlighted the importance of linking the GPEDC process to the UN processes – both the SDGs and the FfD. For example, at the fourth Steering Committee meeting in Washington DC in October 2013, the Nigerian co-chair, Minister Okonjo-Iweala, indicated that work done within the Global Partnership on how effective development cooperation can mobilise domestic resources should be fed into post-2015 discussions, including the work of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing (GPEDC, 2013).

As with the concern about abandoning the MDGs in favour of a new framework, so too have Africans in the GPEDC constantly reiterated the importance of not neglecting the unfinished business of the aid agenda, including use of country systems, transparency, untying aid, and predictability. The 15th meeting of the SC in 2018 endorsed a proposal to develop a Global Action Plan on Unfinished Business (GPEDC, 2018).

African states also advocated for the establishment of an independent Monitoring Advisory Group. This proposal had emanated from a regional consultation that the AU/NEPAD had held in Kinshasa in November 2014 (GPEDC, 2015). In 2015, the GPEDC established a Monitoring Advisory Group to provide technical expertise and advice to strengthen the Global Partnership monitoring framework and to ensure relevance to the post-2015 context.

Many Africans, both state and non-state actors, recognise that the GPEDC is a forum that gives them an opportunity to hold development partners to account.

Among African states Kenya has shown an increased engagement and leadership on global development and South-South discussions. In 2009, it hosted the UN High Level Conference on South-South Cooperation. In July 2016, Kenya hosted UNCTAD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development) 14 and in November it hosted the GPEDC HLM. The Second High Level meeting of the GPEDC was held in November 2016. At the announcement of its hosting, a senior office in the Ministry of Devolution and Planning said that “Kenya will lead the talks to ensure that a notable outcome for Africa and the developing world will be declared in Nairobi which will shift relations between development partners and recipient countries” (“Kenya to host global aid coordination meeting”, n. d.). During the 71st UNGA in 2016, Kenya expressed the view that the fact that international cooperation remained at the core of the SDGs highlighted “the importance of global partnerships and, in particular, the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation. This partnership has a special role in accelerating delivery of development outcomes as effectively, fairly and efficiently as possible, with particular attention to least developed countries”. (Permanent Mission of the Republic of Kenya to the United Nations, 2016, p. 3).

Kenya's permanent representative to the United Nations, Macharia Kamau, was the chief negotiator on the GPEDC HLM 2 Outcomes document. The hosts of such international meetings can play a catalytic role in ensuring a positive outcome.<sup>27</sup> Kamau's previous experience as co-chair of the OWG and of the IGN on the SDGs stood him in good stead in influencing the process of negotiating the final text and building consensus. As host of the HLM, Kenya played a key role in adding issues to the agenda that were not there initially: the Outcomes document started out as an implementation plan for the SDGs. Africa's position was that, while SDGs needed to be part of the document, the document could not only be limited to them, as Africans were concerned that donors might not fund other issues not covered under SDGs (which also had a more universal applicability). The African group wanted to include a reference to Agenda 2063. Another area where there was disagreement was in the counting of humanitarian aid as part of development. Africans did not want humanitarian assistance, including the funding of refugee camps to be considered as part of development cooperation. This issue had become highly political in developed countries in the wake of the large wave of refugees entering Europe in 2016 (Interview with former United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) official, May 2018).

While the GPEDC still battles to include the bigger emerging powers, the Nairobi Outcomes document reflected progress on tackling some of the underlying tensions in the GPEDC's approach to the substance of “development effectiveness” especially as it pertains to middle-income countries. MICs are home to the largest number of poor people but they also can play an important role in protecting regional and global public goods “to reduce instability and international risks for all”, (GPEDC, 2016, p. 8). The Nairobi Outcomes document emphasised the need to ensure that there was a phased and gradual transition of these countries out of ODA as they became MICs. It also elaborated more on

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27 See for example, Kamau et al. on the Copenhagen COP (Conference of the Parties) on climate change in 2009.



the methodologies to account for the “complex and diverse realities’ of MICs, such as multidimensional measurement approaches that go beyond the per capita income averages, in order to account for the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental” (GPEDC, 2016, p. 21).

#### 4.4 African states and South-South Cooperation

It is worth reflecting a bit more on how African states view SSC and the extent to which there should be a degree of accountability (Sidiropoulos, 2015). For a long time, developing countries and civil society organisations have argued for greater accountability and transparency in not only aid provided by traditional donors, but also in South-South Cooperation (Authors notes, NeST Africa, March 2015).<sup>28</sup> The latter has sometimes been a fraught discussion, as the South and its big players regard SSC as being underpinned by a different set of principles and moral imperatives; the North has to atone for its exploitation of the developing world, a responsibility that does not accrue also to the emerging economies. While “Southern providers”, itself a contentious term, are still developing, the scale of their cooperation and its scope are now very different from those of the 1950s or 1970s when the Buenos Aires Action Plan was adopted. Debates among think tanks working in this field and also among the Network of Southern Think Tanks (NeST) have highlighted this challenge but also that SSC should not be seen through the prism of financial targets in the way that OECD-DAC states are (RIS (Research and Information Systems for Developing Countries, 2017; BMZ [Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung]/GPEDC/DIE [German Development Institute / Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik], 2017).

Regarding how African states view SSC, in APDev’s submission to the OECD in April 2012 entitled “Africa’s Response to the Global Partnership”, Africa indicated that it supported the principle of a two-track approach – engaging with emerging economies through AU-sanctioned forums such as FOCAC (Forum on China-Africa Cooperation), while the GP would complement this process rather than replace it (APDev, n. d., p. 3). The importance of SSC in achieving development goals globally has been recognised by all stakeholders. However, in notes from the African representatives to the HLM in Mexico, made after an international workshop on the GPEDC in Seoul in November 2013 that focused on Implementation Strategies for Effective Development Co-operation at Country Level,<sup>29</sup> they reported that development partners raised the “importance of establishing a framework of principles applicable to all stakeholders in the development environment”. They further reported that China, Brazil and South Africa as South-South providers emphasised that “the South-South relationship constituted a different mechanism with different rules and processes guiding it”. The African representatives went on to add that at the Seoul workshop, all the South-South stakeholders reaffirmed their availability to “participate in discussions in respect of *diversified approaches in the partnership*.” (“Note from the African representatives”, 2013, “Emerging issues”, emphasis added)

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28 See, for instance, the critique of SSC by a member of the Steering Committee (SC) of the GPEDC and head of Reality of Aid Africa, Vitalice Meja (2014).

29 Note from the African representatives to the High Level Meeting in Mexico, Seoul, 18-19 November 2013.

The Nairobi Outcomes document eroded the issues that especially the big Southern providers regarded as important, such as the differentiation between them and traditional donors. Bracho (2017, p. 2) argues that even in Mexico City “some donors seemed uneasy with differentiation because they were dissatisfied with their own commitments, which they increasingly perceived as an unjustified burden made even worse by the ‘unfair competition’ of new donor countries [Southern providers] that had no commitments at all.”

The question that Africa should deliberate is whether the big Southern providers (China, India and Brazil in particular) *do* have an obligation to commitments, not because of historical injustices perpetrated, but because they are now much more powerful economies. Such commitments, however, should be differentiated from those of the North, because of the significant poverty challenges they still face in their own countries.

## 5 Conclusions

This paper set out to analyse how South Africa's engagement in global development structures has changed since it returned to the international community, and what philosophical and ideological drivers have underpinned its priorities. In the first instance, South Africa has sought to be actively involved in the various global initiatives or fora discussing development. This has been underpinned by its belief that Africa's development cannot be addressed autarchically but that the external superstructure plays a critical role. It has also been driven by South Africa's conviction that global governance needs to be reformed. In the first decade of the new South Africa's engagement however, much of its focus was on mobilising African countries to develop both plans and mechanisms and institutions to spur Africa's economic transformation. During this period, it provided visionary leadership in Africa and was also considered a key partner and interlocutor outside Africa. In the second decade, changes in emphasis and approach ensued. There was a strengthening of relations with major Global South players like China, India and Brazil – with sometimes the perception created that African partners were less important. At the highest political level, South Africa projected a strongly Global-South outlook in its international engagements, and a related aversion to complying with Northern actors' positions. This was seen clearly in its terms on the UNSC, its strong advocacy and leadership in the G77, and its gradual disengagement from GPEDC processes, as documented above.

However, South Africa is different from the other major “Southern providers”, and specifically India and China, in the following ways:

- Its assistance is much smaller and mostly focused on state-building dimensions (and less so on concessional finance or lines of credit and so on);
- South Africa is small in global terms. Its tremendous soft power and impact on the global stage comes from its economic size on the continent itself and its leadership role there in constructing institutions and providing platforms for projecting African voices and their concerns onto the global stage. The Africa group is essential to its foreign policy and is recognised by South Africa, even if South Africa finds it sometimes difficult to balance its own interests with those of the continent.

South Africa shares China and India's aversion to being sucked into global structures that are meant to perpetuate a power system of which they are not part, and that would appear to wish to spread developmental responsibilities to the South. South Africa's association with the BRICS grouping is an act of self-definition, which in turn determines the way in which other countries (both in the North and South) perceive it.

While South Africa has not been as outspoken on the matter of the GPEDC as China and India, its absence at the Nairobi HLM was instructive. South Africa's biggest challenge is the tension regarding its Global South identity, which has to balance its commitment to African issues and institutional processes (many of which it played an important role in establishing), and its positioning via its membership of the BRICS (largely) as an emerging power that seeks to contest the current global power configurations.

While South Africa's global engagement is pragmatic, the country has often emphasised that it will not accept Western/OECD-DAC precepts. This is a reflection of the rise of a more ideological perspective in its thinking around global engagement in certain forums, especially ones that fall outside of the United Nations. In advancing Africa's global development, South Africa has sought to leverage influence by chairing important bodies of the Global South – G77. It has also recognised the utility of Southern clubs such as the BRICS and IBSA, but also of the G20 which brings together countries across the North-South divide. South Africa has been strategic in using the G20 on global economic governance issues that have a direct bearing or act as an obstacle to Africa's development trajectory, such as IFFs or infrastructure financing. In the United Nations fora, South Africa has chosen to play a meaningful role by being elected to chair the G77. A chair of the G77 faces the challenge of aggregating diverse views in the grouping so as to maintain both coherence within the group as well as moving the overall process forward constructively. South Africa has shown adeptness at that. This too requires South Africa to play a bridging role within the Global South.

In all the fora discussed in this paper a contestation between North and South is clear, although the degrees of difference vary. Although the world reflects many more variations than at the time of the New International Economic Order in the 1970s, both sides still observe the world through an old-world dichotomy – intentionally or not. The GPEDC process illustrates some of these challenges and variations. Many in the South see this advantageously; the big Southern powers spurn it. The United Nations is of course the most legitimate and inclusive body for both the “what” and “how” of development, but there are also other vehicles and structures that are building on aspects of development. Sometimes outcomes of these processes predetermine the agenda in other fora. The big Southern actors need to bear that in mind in selecting the platforms they engage with and how. Here South Africa could make proposals to other major Southern actors on the means to arrive at a set of principles among Southern providers that reflect the concerns of African states on local ownership and mutual accountability. Bracho (2017, p. 25) argues that it was at the Nairobi HLM, with the absence of the big Southern providers, that a scenario began to materialise: “The lack of cooperation between traditional and emerging donors was helping to drive the entire development cooperation agenda towards a future of diluted standards, practices, commitments and responsibilities for all official donors, both Northern and Southern”. At Nairobi, Bracho notes, the Southern providers lost their specificity and together with traditional donors became “partner countries providing

support” (Bracho, 2017, p. 24). Such an outcome is diametrically opposed to the interests of African states.

The world is in a state of flux and the erosion of multilateralism is being felt across issues. If GPEDC is a way-station to a new global development structure, South Africa should engage more actively with other African states bilaterally and through NEPAD and the AU on what the content and the process would be for a global development architecture that is shorn of the baggage of the OECD-DAC language and history. Already the AU is exploring what the erosion of multilateralism might mean for Africa on various different issues. There should be a specific working group convened by the AU tasked with the consideration of a number of scenarios in this regard.

For countries like South Africa and the rest of Africa, a body that is inclusive and provides an equal voice for everyone, even if flawed, is a better option than the emergence of multiple frameworks each with its own norms, standards, rights and responsibilities.

In the short term, the GPEDC should not expect convergence from the big Southern players, especially not at a time when the United States is reducing its commitments to multilateral bodies, and where the South is palpably feeling the change in power dynamics in the West. Also, the definitions, modalities and assessment of SSC in this new global environment are still evolving. Harmonisation of frameworks is not a desirable option among Southern actors in the short term. The commitment of Southern actors to SDGs might favour a process to create greater coherence in SSC, but this would need to evolve organically and from the inside out. What China, India, Brazil and South Africa will have to consider, however, is the extent to which their reticence in engaging in some of these debates might cede the space to other Southern and Northern actors, changing the global narrative without their input.

A Southern organic process may include a platform that allows Southern actors – both those providing cooperation and those receiving it – to shape their own narratives, separate from the discussions in “mixed” forums. South Africa could work in the first instance with its IBSA partners (and the BRICS) in exploring such an idea that could be focused on developing some methods to address the concerns of African states about Southern providers. This might be a code of conduct, building on the South-South Cooperation principles, but addressing more directly the reservations some countries and civil society actors have. Alternatively, the UNDCF is a UN platform which South Africa and other Southern actors could amplify to take a lead on this issue but it would need to be provided with sufficient resources by them.

In a global system which is becoming more fragmented but where the solutions require more cooperation and streamlining, there is a need for a global development architecture. To some extent, the United Nations fulfils this mandate, although its ability to execute this effectively is subject to the politicised environment that has been exacerbated more recently by the Trump administration's approach to the body, but more structurally in the inability of the North and the South “to relate to the United Nations and to each other in terms of delegation and control” (Baumann, 2018, p. 637). It is unlikely that a unitary and entirely harmonised architecture is possible in the short to medium term. However, important Southern actors, such as South Africa, who do not dominate the global development landscape but nevertheless have credibility among both Southern and Northern countries, should use their leverage to encourage, not stand-offs in the diversity

of institutions, but rather innovation so that the progressive changes witnessed in the global development cooperation terrain in the last two decades are not lost.

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