

Monday, 13 April 2026]

No 63—2026] THIRD SESSION, SEVENTH PARLIAMENT

PARLIAMENT

OF THE

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**ANNOUNCEMENTS,
TABLINGS AND
COMMITTEE REPORTS**

MONDAY, 13 APRIL 2026

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

National Assembly

The Speaker

1. Referral to Committees of papers tabled

- (1) The following paper is referred to the **Standing Committee on Finance** for consideration and report:
 - (a) Annual Performance Plan of the South African Revenue Services for 2026/27.
 - (2) The following paper is referred to the **Portfolio Committee on Forestry, Fisheries and Environment**:
 - (a) Government Notice No. 7181 published in *Government Gazette* No. 54227 dated 27 February 2026: Implementation of the Revised Biodiversity Management Plan for *Pelargonium Sidoides* in South Africa, in terms of the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act, 2004 (Act No. 10 of 2004).
 - (3) The following papers are referred to the **Portfolio Committee on Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities**:
 - (a) Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Government of the Republic of South Africa and the Government of the State of Qatar on Bilateral Cooperation in the Fields of Empowerment of Women and Persons with Disabilities, tabled in terms of section 231(3) of the Constitution of the Republic, 1996.
 - (b) Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Government of the Republic of South Africa and the Government of the Republic of Uganda on Bilateral Cooperation in the Fields of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, tabled in terms of section 231(3) of the Constitution of the Republic, 1996.
 - (4) The following papers are referred to the **Portfolio Committee on Mineral and Petroleum Resources** for consideration and report:
 - (a) Revised Strategic Plan for 2025 – 2030 and Annual Performance Plan of the Council for Geoscience for 2026/27.
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TABLINGS

National Assembly

1. The Minister of Finance

- (a) Report on the use of R10 billion to fund expenditure of an exceptional nature in the 2025/26 financial year, in terms of section 16 of the Public Finance Management Act, 1999 (Act No. 1 of 1999).

Referred to the **Standing Committee on Appropriations** for consideration.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

National Assembly

1. Report of the Portfolio Committee on International Relations and Cooperation on its Oversight Regional Oversight visit on SA Missions in the SADC Region gathered at the South African High Commission in Lusaka, Zambia 3 – 7 February 2026, dated 25 March 2026

The Portfolio Committee on International Relations and Cooperation (hereinafter referred to as the Committee), having embarked on Oversight Regional Oversight visit on SA Missions in the SADC Region gathered at the South African High Commission in Lusaka, Zambia 3 – 7 February 2026 reports as follows:

1. Introduction

The mandate of the Portfolio Committee on International Relations and Cooperation is to oversee the implementation of South Africa's Foreign Policy. The international activities related to international relations and cooperation are carried out by the Department of International Relations and Cooperation together with its 115 South African Missions abroad. The Department is responsible for developing and maintaining bilateral political and economic partnerships in the various regions of the world. This is usually pursued through structured bilateral mechanisms such as bi-national commissions (BNCs), joint national commissions (JNCs) or joint commissions (JTs).

In line with the Statement of Intent of the Government of National Unity (GNU) as guided by the National Development Plan (NDP), the Department has undertaken to contribute towards inclusive economic growth through attracting Foreign Direct Investment, promoting tourism and creating employment. The South African diplomatic and consular missions abroad are charged with implementing South Africa's foreign policy to enhance its international profile and serve as strategic mechanisms for the achievement of national interest. Economic Diplomacy is a focus area and a vehicle for the Department and SA Missions abroad to tap into partnerships that would contribute towards graduating the country from the circle of poverty, inequality and unemployment.

The Portfolio Committee prioritises oversight over the implementation of Economic Diplomacy by focussing on the work of Missions abroad relating to their efforts towards assisting the country to

address the triple challenges and combat the injustices of the past. The Portfolio Committee's oversight interest is to establish how each Missions is qualitatively and quantitatively advancing economic diplomacy and partnerships to benefit the people of South Africa. The implementation of structured bilateral mechanisms, being international agreements between South Africa and other countries, are the responsibility of these Missions abroad. The Portfolio Committee would want Missions abroad to substantiate their contribution where they are situated, in support of South Africa's national interest. Thus, the Committee monitors the work of South Africa's Missions abroad on Economic Diplomacy, achievements and challenges thereto.

The priorities of the 7th Parliament include ensuring service delivery relating to infrastructure. For DIRCO this translates to the Digital Strategy focusing on ICT modernisation project. It is in the oversight interest of the Portfolio Committee to find out how the reported roll-out of this project to all SA Missions has progressed so far. Another concern has been raised by the Auditor General that some SA Missions rent accommodation space, even though South Africa has vacant properties or land parcels where office accommodation could be built. The Committee is taking steps to ensure that the challenges do not recur.

2. Objectives

Meeting with South Africa's Missions in the SADC Region, venue in Lusaka, Zambia

- a. To conduct physical oversight at the South African High Commission in Lusaka, the Chancery and the Official Residence.
- b. To assess the work of South Africa's Missions in the SADC Region Part 1 area to ensure their pursuit of bilateral relations address the triple challenges facing South Africa.
- c. To assess how the Missions pursue their work related to geopolitical relations that South Africa shares with the countries in the SADC Region Part 1 area.
- d. To assess how the work of the Missions has opened opportunities for South African companies, and specifically the previously marginalised groups in our society.
- e. To assess the trade volumes generated by the Missions between South Africa and the SADC Region Part 1 area, including other countries where other Embassies are situated under their accreditation.
- f. To assess how the Missions are implementing cultural diplomacy, people to people relations between the people of South Africa and the people of the SADC Region Part 1 area.

- g. To assess the status of state-owned properties abroad and vacant land parcels in the SADC Region Part 1 area, if any, establish their level of neglect, to determine the state of readiness by the Department to assume custodianship of state-owned land parcels and properties abroad, as provided by the Foreign Service Act 2019.
- h. To assess the work of the Corporate Services Managers and whether the Missions have in any way contributed to the negative audit outcomes in the past financial year, and what steps are taken to ensure no re-occurrence.
- i. To assess whether the budget is commensurate with the work the Missions must accomplish.
- j. To assess whether the number of staff in the SA Embassies is adequate for the volume of work that the Missions need to do.
- k. What are the volumes of South African citizens being served in the Missions, and what type of Consular Services are extended when the need arises?
- l. To assess the completeness of the Asset register of movable assets. Throughout the process, the Committee would ensure that it is up to date, with codes, and the movable assets can indeed be verified in a Net-trace system.
- m. Assess the workability of the ICT systems and progress on the implementation of the ICT Modernisation project at these Missions.
- n. To assess the processes relating to visa issuances and whether the ICT system is optimal for this purpose.
- o. To assess how long the state-owned properties and or land have been vacant in the SADC Region Part 1 area. Is it bought by government of South Africa or a gift, if so from whom. Establish the reasons for the properties and or land to stand vacant. The purpose for which the land is for. Establish how much the state-owned properties and land were bought for and the current value. Establish if there have been concerns from the municipalities of the countries where the immovable assets remain unoccupied and even the neighbourhood on the vacant state-owned property and or land.

1.1. Delegation

1.1.1. Members of Parliament

- Hon SOR Mahumapelo MP (ANC) – Leader of the delegation
- Hon M Modise-Mpya, MP (ANC)
- Hon R Smith (DA)
- Hon N Mhlongo (EFF)

- Hon K Litchfield-Tshabalala

Parliamentary Officials

- Mr L Sigwela (Committee Secretary)

2. Opening Remarks and purpose of the Meeting: Hon SOR Mahumapelo, Chairperson of the PC on International Relations and Cooperation

The chairperson noted that the Committee reaffirmed that South Africa's Foreign Policy is grounded in the vision of achieving a better South Africa, a better Africa and a better world. It was highlighted that the Portfolio Committee plays a crucial role in overseeing how the Department of International Relations and Cooperation and the African Renaissance Fund implement this mandate. Since foreign policy work occurs beyond the country's borders, the Committee's oversight naturally extends to South Africa's Missions abroad, which are the primary drivers of the nation's international relations agenda.

The Chairperson emphasised Parliament's constitutional obligations, noting that it passes legislation, allocates the departmental budget, and holds the Executive accountable. Members of Parliament are directly mandated and answerable to citizens, reinforcing the importance of strong public involvement in parliamentary diplomacy. All committees conduct oversight in various spheres of government; however, the Committee's mandate is unique due to the global dispersal of 115 South African Missions, which requires innovative oversight mechanisms.

To address these logistical challenges, the Committee adopted a regional oversight model that alternates between physical and virtual engagements to ensure effective monitoring of foreign policy implementation. Europe was selected as the first region under this model, which led to the Committee's presence in Brussels. The Committee reiterated its expectation that DIRCO, the ARF, and Missions should clearly demonstrate how their work contributes to Economic Diplomacy, particularly regarding job creation, attracting foreign direct investment, and promoting equality.

The Chairperson also expressed concern over DIRCO receiving a Qualified Audit Opinion for the 2024/25 financial year, noting that many of the challenges originate from Missions abroad. Key issues include incomplete asset registers, inadequate financial and corporate management

competencies, weaknesses in procurement and contract management, and poor revenue controls. Despite the seriousness of these shortcomings, the Committee is troubled by the limited application of consequence management across the Department and Missions.

In conclusion, the Chairperson stated that the purpose of the Committee's presence is to gather information that will shape the final Oversight Report to be tabled in Parliament. All issues raised and observations made during engagements will inform recommendations directed to the Minister. The Committee reiterated its commitment to strengthening Foreign Policy implementation and ensuring that South Africa's Missions abroad effectively advance the country's diplomatic, economic, and developmental interests.

3. Welcoming statement by HE , Mr S Cachalia Ambassador to Zambia

The Portfolio Committee was received by South African Ambassador to Zambia H.E Mr S Cachalia. The Ambassador opened the briefing with an overview of Zambia's political evolution, tracing developments from independence through the transition from one-party to multi-party democracy and into the current administration. He highlighted Zambia's population of roughly 20 million, its provincial structure, and the expansion of the voter roll by 1.6 million ahead of the August 2026 national elections. He also outlined the unicameral parliamentary system, local council elections, and the first-past-the-post voting model. Parliamentary reforms that introduce new nominated seats for women, youth, and persons with disabilities were described, alongside criticism that these additions may increase executive influence and reshape constituency representation.

A section of the briefing addressed the economic context and recent shocks Zambia has endured, including drought and the Kariba Dam failure which triggered severe load-shedding. These crises formed the backdrop for subsequent economic stabilization measures, including efforts to reverse a period of heavy dollarization when the kwacha had weakened to 28 per USD. Recovery has since accelerated: the currency has strengthened to around 19–20 per USD, inflation has declined from about 25% to single digits, and public debt has fallen from 112% to around 87% following IMF-supported restructuring. Some copper revenues are now received in yuan, supporting currency management and debt servicing.

The Ambassador then turned to Zambia's mining sector, the engine of its macroeconomic rebound. He noted that annual copper production is approximately 900,000 metric tons, driven by major operators such as First Quantum, Vedanta/Konkola, Mopani, and Chinese state-owned firms. The economy benefits from diverse export destinations, while artisanal mining, gem extraction, coal activity, and smelting ambitions contribute additional revenue streams. China, India, the UAE, and Western companies all play substantial roles in ownership and operations. The resurgent mining sector—bolstered by reopened mines and strong global demand—has underpinned Zambia's fiscal recovery and investor confidence.

Beyond mining, the Ambassador highlighted agriculture, trade corridors, and industrial strategy as pillars of Zambia's development agenda. Following recovery from drought, the country has returned to a maize surplus and is expanding exports of soya, tobacco, and other commodities. South African and Zimbabwean farmers and technical specialists are active in regions such as Mukushi and Sulwezi. Zambia's strategic plans include leveraging the Copperbelt through the Lobito and north-south corridors to improve access to Atlantic ports, while addressing bottlenecks such as border congestion at Kasumbalesa and infrastructure constraints requiring investment in rail and road networks. Ten-year export incentives aim to stimulate manufacturing, and large firms such as Trade Kings play a central role in industrial expansion.

The briefing concluded with a focus on Zambia's foreign policy and regional relationships. The Ambassador described Zambia's stance as one of "positive neutrality," maintaining friendly ties across global blocs while remaining active in SADC and contributing peacekeepers to South Sudan and the DRC. He underscored Zambia's extensive economic and social linkages with South Africa, noting a large Zambian diaspora, significant reliance on South African goods and services, and the skewed trade balance favoring South Africa. Governance challenges—such as corruption risks, low wages, and cross-border trade issues—were acknowledged as constraints on inclusive growth. The session closed with introductions, discussion, and a shared local meal.

4. Mr C Kriek, Charge d'Affairs: Angola

The presentation provides a comprehensive overview of Angola's national profile, highlighting its economic indicators, demographic trends, and geopolitical importance. Angola, with a population exceeding 36 million, remains one of the largest economies in the SADC region and is the continent's second-largest oil producer. Its strategic location, abundant mineral resources—including 36 of the

51 minerals critical for global energy transition—and expanding infrastructure position it as an increasingly influential regional actor. Despite this potential, the country continues to grapple with high unemployment, inflation, inequality, and heavy reliance on oil revenue, shaping both its domestic and external engagements.

The presentation also highlights the deep historical ties and evolving diplomatic relationship between South Africa and Angola. Formalised through structures such as the Binational Commission, the partnership spans political cooperation, high-level visits, and 44 agreements across various sectors. The Mission’s economic diplomacy efforts include promoting trade, investment, and tourism while supporting South African companies operating in Angola. Although trade has generally increased over the years, implementation challenges, limited funding for trade missions, regulatory differences, and foreign-currency shortages continue to hinder optimal cooperation and business confidence.

In terms of internal mission operations, the presentation outlines progress and difficulties in areas such as investment facilitation, DBSA-funded infrastructure projects, and consular services. The Mission facilitates significant outward investment, supports South African companies, and manages rising visa and consular-related demands. However, persistent ICT system failures, visa-processing delays, and unresolved issues with the deteriorated state-owned official residence in Luanda impede operational efficiency. Staffing gaps particularly in senior diplomatic posts—further strain the Mission’s ability to fully execute its mandate.

Cultural diplomacy also forms a key pillar of the Mission’s work, with initiatives such as the “African Liberation Heritage Route” aimed at honouring Angola’s contribution to South Africa’s liberation struggle. Despite limited resources, the Mission continues to participate in regional cultural events and support heritage-related projects. The concluding sections of the presentation detail budget constraints, audit outcomes, and administrative reforms, noting improvements in financial controls but persistent funding shortages that limit project implementation. Overall, the presentation portrays a Mission committed to strengthening South Africa–Angola relations despite operational, financial, and structural challenges.

5. HE Ms YL Myakayaka-Manzini: Ambassador to the Republic of Malawi

The presentation outlines Malawi’s strategic value to South Africa’s regional diplomacy, focusing on how bilateral cooperation can help address South Africa’s triple challenges of poverty, inequality,

and unemployment. Malawi offers diverse investment opportunities including mining, agriculture processing, pharmaceuticals, tourism, logistics, and energy that South Africa can tap into to stimulate job creation and promote skills export, especially for unemployed graduates. The presentation notes that despite Malawi's high unemployment and dependency on donor funding, its economic sectors provide openings for mutually beneficial partnerships aimed at reducing poverty.

Malawi also plays an important geopolitical role in SADC, contributing to regional security, peacekeeping and political cooperation. It participates in Joint Permanent Commissions on Defence and Security with its neighbours and currently chairs the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence, and Security Cooperation. Malawi and South Africa work together in peace missions, including in the DRC and Mozambique. The mission highlighted Malawi's intention to contest the AU Peace and Security Council seat alongside South Africa and Lesotho and noted its voting patterns at the UN, particularly its tendency to abstain or vote against Gaza-related resolutions.

The presentation also details efforts to advance economic diplomacy and business opportunities for South African companies, including marginalized groups. Sectors with strong prospects include tourism (ecotourism, hospitality), mining (rare earths, rutile, titanium, gold, uranium), agriculture, pharmaceuticals, telecommunications, and renewable/thermal energy. Trade volumes underline South Africa's economic importance to Malawi, with South Africa exporting ZAR 743 million worth of goods by November 2025 versus importing only ZAR 41.9 million. Malawi relies heavily on South African manufactured goods due to its landlocked position and limited industrial capacity.

On the cultural diplomacy front, the mission acknowledges budget constraints limiting its ability to host events but emphasizes continued engagement when invited by other embassies. The mission supports academic exchange, encourages Malawians to consider South African institutions, and highlights people-to-people links such as the annual Nguni/Ngoni cultural celebrations featuring King Misuzulu. South African artists frequently perform in Malawi, supported by institutions like Standard Bank Malawi, contributing to strong cultural ties.

Finally, the presentation details extensive administrative, property management, staffing, consular, and ICT challenges. Multiple state-owned properties remain vacant or under disposal processing, though maintenance work has been ongoing. The mission faces staffing shortages, delayed approvals for critical posts, low morale among locally recruited staff due to rising living costs, and insufficient budget allocations worsened by rising fuel, utility, and VAT costs in Malawi. ICT failures including

a month-long network disconnection have significantly disrupted visa processing, forcing reliance on handwritten visas. Consular work continues, including monitoring detained South Africans and processing essential civic documents. The mission underscores the need for improved funding, equipment, and departmental responsiveness to ensure effective service delivery.

6. Mr M Matiwane Charge d’Affaires to the Republic of Congo

The presentation begins by outlining the bilateral relationship between South Africa and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), formally established in 1992. South Africa maintains an embassy in Kinshasa and a consulate in Lubumbashi, with accreditation across nine DRC provinces. Cooperation is structured through the Binational Commission created in 2004, comprising political, diplomatic, economic, defence, security, and social committees. The presentation emphasises both longstanding ties and ongoing challenges, including cultural barriers and opportunities for enhancing political and economic cooperation.

The second section focuses on regional and multilateral dynamics, highlighting instability in eastern DRC, the SAMIDRC deployment, and the phased withdrawal from MONUSCO. The mission also tracks several peace processes such as the Doha Framework, Qatar negotiations, and the Washington Accords while participating in SADC and EAC engagements. These dynamics underscore the DRC’s role in regional security, the complexity of conflict mediation, and the need for coordinated African and international responses.

A major portion of the presentation examines economic diplomacy, which is central to the mission’s mandate. The embassy and consulate actively identify investment opportunities, engage with provincial governments, meet potential investors (e.g., Gécamines), host trade missions, and participate in events like DRC Mining Week and the Mining Indaba. Approximately 20 South African companies operate in the DRC across mining, banking, transport, telecommunications, and logistics. South Africa exports agricultural goods, machinery, and fuel to the DRC, while importing minerals such as diamonds, copper, cobalt, gold, and crude oil. Challenges include taxation issues, infrastructure deficits, insecurity in the eastern regions, and bureaucratic red tape in both countries.

The presentation also highlights new investment opportunities and infrastructure initiatives. South African businesses can expand into agriculture, agro-processing, pharmaceuticals, construction, renewable energy, water purification, tourism, and mining services. Key strategic projects include

DBSA-funded upgrades to the Lobito Corridor, support for feasibility studies on the Kipushi–Banana Corridor, and the Kolwezi–Solwezi road connecting the Copperbelt to SADC trade routes. These projects have the potential to significantly enhance regional transport efficiency and open new commercial pathways into Tanzania, Namibia, and South Africa.

Operational matters feature prominently as well, including the status of state-owned properties, asset management, ICT systems, and audit compliance. The Kinshasa mission owns the chancery, official residence, 12 staff residences, and a recreation centre, while Lubumbashi relies entirely on rented facilities. Asset verification was successfully completed in Kinshasa for 2025/26, while Lubumbashi continues to implement departmental audit recommendations on asset disposal. ICT challenges persist in both missions: power cuts disrupt Kinshasa operations, and Lubumbashi faces poor connectivity, malfunctioning Cisco phones, visa-label losses due to server failures, and electricity instability despite migrating to optical fibre.

Finally, the presentation reviews the budget, staffing, and consular responsibilities. The Kinshasa mission's 2025/26 budget totals ZAR 1.56 million, while Lubumbashi's stands at ZAR 946 000; both highlight the strain of fulfilling expanding mandates with limited resources. Staffing gaps are significant several political and management posts remain vacant, and Lubumbashi has shortages in both transferred officials and locally recruited personnel. Consular workloads include visa applications via VFS Global, vital document processing (births, IDs, passports), assistance to distressed South Africans, repatriations, and emergency travel certificates, particularly in Lubumbashi where many expatriates work in mining hubs such as Kolwezi.

7. Discussions

Members began by asking the Angola mission to clarify why SADC economies, including Angola, continue to rely heavily on raw material exports despite persistent volatility, and how South Africa could help the region transition to manufacturing and service driven economies.

Members also asked for clarity on why air travel within SADC remains extremely expensive, often costing more than flights to Europe, and how limited aviation frequency constrains trade and tourism.

Further questions focused on competitive regional trade corridors, particularly the Lobito Corridor and whether South Africa risks losing strategic ground due to its own port and freight rail inefficiencies.

Clarity was sought new, practical proposals to enhance bilateral relations in areas such as tourism, culture, trade facilitation, and air access, and asked how South African diplomats in Angola coordinate with African, BRICS, and EU ambassadors to advance unified continental positions.

Members questioned the persistent contradictions between head-office reports, which claimed that ICT issues were nearly resolved, and mission accounts showing that systems were still failing and causing major delays in visa processing and general operations.

Members sought clarity on why performance contracts with service providers were not yielding results, why missions were left offline for extended periods, and how these failures affect economic diplomacy, service delivery, and South Africa's international reputation.

There was a proposal of an urgent, extraordinary oversight meeting that would include the Minister, Director-General, CFO, DIRCO ICT leadership, and both the previous and current service providers to establish accountability, enforce deadlines, and resolve the systemic failures.

In the Malawi segment, Members asked for clarity about the country's economic distress, the functionality and status of bilateral agreements, and Malawi's bid for the AU Peace and Security Council seat, questioning whether the contestation with South Africa and Lesotho aligned with SADC unity.

Members also sought detailed explanations on operational challenges in the mission, including inflation-driven budget pressures, fuel shortages, property maintenance issues, vacant posts, limited consular equipment, and December ICT outages caused by non-payment of service providers.

Further questions related to regional security issues such as refugee flows from Mozambique, the implications of the Bushiri extradition matter for bilateral trust, and opportunities for cooperation in mining, agriculture, cannabis industry development, and cultural or heritage diplomacy.

Committee Members sought clarity on several political, security, operational, and economic issues affecting South Africa's engagement in the DRC.

Members further asked for clarification on the security risks faced by South African diplomatic staff, given the severe instability in the eastern DRC where more than 120 armed groups operate and where the M23/AFC forces captured Goma in January 2025.

Members also sought clarity on why African-led peace processes (such as the Nairobi and Rwanda dialogues) were being overshadowed by the Doha and Washington-led initiatives, and what impact this sidelining had on regional credibility.

Questions were raised regarding illicit mineral extraction, with Members asking how minerals could still be smuggled out despite the presence of international peacekeepers and regional security structures.

Members also questioned the criteria used to select South African companies for upcoming DTIC-led investment missions, asking why 40 companies had been identified without clear transparency measures.

The Committee sought guidance on the operational readiness of the missions in Kinshasa and Lubumbashi, including questions on ICT failures, unstable electricity supply, and whether the missions' infrastructure could support growing diplomatic and business demands.

Members questioned whether emerging air connectivity issues and fluctuating ticket prices were limiting South African business and diplomatic engagement in the DRC.

Finally, Members sought clarity on regional diplomatic relations, particularly how South Africa should navigate tensions involving Rwanda, Uganda, and the East African Community, and whether these rivalries worsened instability in the DRC.

8. Responses

In response, the Angola mission confirmed that travel costs increased sharply after SAA exited the Luanda route, explaining that SAA intends to return through a code-share arrangement and possible cargo operations, while Airlink operates with reliable but limited weekly flights.

They also explained that both telecommunication and financial-system interconnectivity remain weak, making cross-border payments and business operations difficult.

The mission highlighted ongoing customs delays resulting from Angola not yet ratifying an existing customs cooperation MOU and expressed commitment to pursuing follow-up.

They acknowledged that the absence of a full Ambassador reduces diplomatic access but confirmed active participation in African group meetings.

The mission also emphasised that economic diplomacy requires long-term, 10–15-year planning that outlives individual heads of mission.

Mission representatives reiterated that ICT systems continued to malfunction regularly, with some outages linked to delayed payments to service providers. They explained that these disruptions result in slowed visa processing, bottlenecks during peak seasons, and reputational damage with host-country partners.

In response, the Malawi mission explained that the country faces severe economic hardship, with inflation, rising utilities, and widespread poverty affecting both the macro-environment and the mission's operational capacity.

They confirmed that South Africa remains one of Malawi's top trading partners and identified investment opportunities in agriculture, mining, pharmaceuticals, tourism, and cultural industries.

The mission described significant operational strain caused by rising fuel costs, staff vacancies, and limited ICT and printing equipment—factors that heavily affected visa processing.

They noted that ICT outages were directly tied to delayed payments to the service provider. On political matters, they confirmed Malawi's active role in SADC defence and security structures and directed the Committee to the Department of Justice for detailed updates on the Bushiri case.

They acknowledged that cultural diplomacy remains constrained by budget limitations but affirmed the potential for deeper cooperation in heritage and educational exchanges

In response, the mission confirmed that the region remains volatile, that South African peacekeepers suffered casualties under SAMIDRC, and that staff safety remains a central concern requiring strengthened mission security infrastructure.

The mission responded that these external processes indeed lacked sufficient African participation, limiting their legitimacy and weakening regional ownership of peace efforts. They added that this exclusion contributed to persistent conflict dynamics and undermined long-term political stability.

The mission clarified that illegal extraction continues to benefit foreign entities especially in Europe and is linked to proxy conflicts involving neighbouring states like Rwanda and Uganda. They emphasised that weak oversight, entrenched criminal networks, and porous borders continue to enable such exploitation.

In response, the mission acknowledged that the criteria required clarification and committed to providing a list of the 20 South African companies currently operating in the DRC, while also engaging DTIC to explain and standardise the selection process.

The mission responded that both missions had completed 100% asset verification, but frequent power outages continued to undermine ICT systems despite Lubumbashi migrating to optical fibre.

The mission explained that although new air-route developments were welcomed, high travel taxes and price volatility imposed by the DRC government continued to discourage travel and investment.

The mission responded that these dynamics were indeed contributing to the complex proxy conflict in the region, reinforcing the need for stronger African-led conflict-resolution structures and enhanced SADC and AU coordination to stabilise the Great Lakes region.

9. HE Ms N Mayende-Malepe, Ambassador to the republic of Tanzania

The presentation opens by reaffirming the historical and strategic partnership between South Africa and Tanzania, rooted deeply in the liberation struggle and shared Pan-African values. The Mission notes that both countries maintain a common vision for peace, security, and continental development. It outlines the status of the Bi-National Commission (BNC), last held in 2023 in South Africa, with the next session rescheduled to March 2026 due to Tanzania's 2025 elections and South Africa's G20 commitments. Engagements are complicated by Tanzania's administrative shift to Dodoma while the mission remains based in Dar es Salaam, requiring increased travel and coordination.

Bilateral relations remain warm, structured through BNC mechanisms and reinforced by formal diplomatic engagements since 1994. Two key MoUs were signed in 2023: one on political and diplomatic consultations and another on cooperation between Tanzania's Centre for Foreign Relations and South Africa's Diplomatic Academy. The mission highlights priorities for the upcoming BNC strengthening cooperation, reviewing joint commitments, identifying new collaboration areas, and elevating engagement on regional and global issues impacting both countries.

The presentation emphasises regional cooperation, especially shared roles in peace and security. South Africa and Tanzania collaborate in peacekeeping missions, such as efforts in the DRC and South Sudan. Both countries, along with Malawi, were troop contributors to the SADC Mission in the DRC (SAMIDRC), suffering casualties while supporting regional stability. Tanzania also facilitates the repatriation corridor for military equipment, underscoring its logistical importance and regional positioning.

Economically, Tanzania hosts over 230 South African companies, making South Africa one of its most significant investors. These companies span telecommunications, banking, hospitality, pharmaceuticals, manufacturing, logistics, and mining services. South African investment peaked at USD 600 million and remains competitive among major global partners. The Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) has committed substantial infrastructure financing. Yet, economic challenges persist, particularly on double-taxation disputes, excise duties, and Tanzania's non-recognition of SADC certificates of origin, leading to operational barriers for South African businesses. Trade remains heavily in South Africa's favour, with South Africa exporting machinery,

vehicles, technology, and manufactured goods, while Tanzania's exports mostly comprise gold, agricultural products, and raw commodities.

The report also outlines growth in tourism, cultural cooperation, and people-to-people programmes. The mission works with South African Tourism to market South Africa, while improved air connectivity such as the early return of SAA in 2025 and additional flights by Air Tanzania, Airlink, and FlySafair supports increased travel. Tanzania's tourism potential includes medical and conference tourism, supported by a 90-day visa-free arrangement. Culturally, the African Liberation Heritage Programme, SOMAFCO legacy sites, and education cooperation (including an MoU on teaching Kiswahili) strengthen ties. The mission is also involved in monument construction and heritage preservation initiatives linked to the liberation struggle.

Finally, the presentation highlights recent political developments, mission capacity, and operational constraints. Tanzania implemented Vision 2050 and a new foreign policy centred on economic diplomacy, regional integration, and digital transformation. The 2025 general elections were marred by violence, internet shutdowns, and concerns raised by SADC and AU observers. President Samia Suluhu Hassan initiated an Inquiry Commission for post-election reforms, with South Africa deploying Dr Naledi Pandor as Special Envoy. Operationally, the mission faces ICT limitations including non-functional Cisco phones, outdated desktops, and insufficient equipment

forcing shared laptop use. Budget limitations restrict engagement activities, and consular and immigration services experience delays due to manual systems and peak-period backlogs. Still, civic and consular services (passports, visas, authentications, assistance to distressed nationals) continue to be delivered despite resource challenges.

10. Mr MJ Gininda: Charge d'Affaires, Republic of Zimbabwe

The presentation begins by outlining Zimbabwe's political landscape, characterised by decades-long dominance of ZANU-PF since 1980 and its two-thirds majority in Parliament. Internal political tensions persist, particularly around proposed constitutional amendments to extend President Mnangagwa's term to 2030. The main opposition, the Citizens Coalition for Change (CCC), is fragmented, weakening political competition. This political environment shapes the operating context

for South Africa's mission, especially as events influence bilateral engagements and regional stability.

Economically, Zimbabwe continues to face structural challenges, despite moderate growth projections GDP rising from USD 53.3 billion in 2025 to USD 55.4 billion in 2026. Inflation remains high (32.7% in local currency as of October 2025), and the country operates with a constrained fiscal space, recording a budget deficit of USD 140.1 million. Public debt stands at 44% of GDP, and development assistance remains a key funding source. These pressures have broad social consequences, including high unemployment, widespread poverty affecting over half the population, low social protection coverage, and ongoing deficits in water and sanitation services.

Bilateral relations with South Africa remain deep and historically rooted, formally structured through the Bi-National Commission (BNC) established in 2015. The last BNC session was held in Harare in 2019, with senior officials preparing for the next session in 2026. High-level exchanges continued between 2024 and 2025, including reciprocal visits by President Ramaphosa and President Mnangagwa. Over 30 agreements and MoUs guide cooperation across political, economic, and social sectors. The mission continues to strengthen diplomatic cooperation through sustained political dialogue and coordination.

Economically, Zimbabwe is one of South Africa's largest trading partners in the region. In 2025, South Africa exported goods worth R72.5 billion to Zimbabwe, while imports amounted to R8.8 billion. Trade is driven by South African exports of chemicals, machinery, food products, and iron and steel, while Zimbabwe sends mineral products, precious metals, and processed foods. More than 120 South African companies operate in Zimbabwe, spanning mining, banking, telecommunications, hospitality, packaging, and manufacturing. Zimbabwean companies also maintain investments in South Africa, particularly in tourism, energy, manufacturing, and financial services.

The mission also details Zimbabwe's geopolitical role and South Africa's diplomatic posture. South Africa and Zimbabwe maintain aligned positions on Western Sahara and the Israel-Palestine conflict, while South Africa supports Zimbabwe's efforts to join BRICS, the New Development Bank, and the UN Security Council (non-permanent seat for 2027–2028). However, divergences exist such as Zimbabwe's 2021 agreement enabling Rwanda to recruit Zimbabwean teachers and its decision to suspend tariffs on U.S. goods following U.S. tariff hikes. Cultural diplomacy continues despite budget

constraints, with the mission participating in Africa Day, Mandela Day, and defence training exchanges.

Operationally, the mission faces significant constraints. Budget limitations hinder political, economic, and public diplomacy activities. Staffing gaps persist across senior political, security, and administrative roles, including a vacant Head of Mission since July 2025. Consular services are active, managing prison visits, repatriations, document certification, and assistance to distressed nationals. However, ICT challenges remain substantial: power outages, outdated systems, and lack of integration with other South African systems affect visa issuance. State-owned properties such as the Chancery and Official Residence require extensive maintenance, including waterproofing, replacement of damaged infrastructure, upgrades to security systems, and drilling a second borehole due to unreliable water supply.

11. Mr D Derksen, Charge d’Affaires: Republic of Mozambique

The presentation opens by emphasising the deep, historic, and strategic relationship between South Africa and Mozambique, anchored in shared regional goals, extensive bilateral frameworks, and alignment with SADC Vision 2030, the RISDP, the SADC Industrialisation Strategy, the Regional Infrastructure Master Plan, and the AU Agenda 2063. Bilateral cooperation is governed through 78 agreements and MoUs covering trade, energy, transport, ports, rail, and education. The relationship is managed at the level of the Bi-National Commission (BNC), whose 4th session was held in December 2025, resulting in six new cooperation instruments and 99 formal decisions, signalling strengthened political and economic coordination between the two countries.

A major focus of the mission’s political diplomacy is supporting South Africa’s triple challenges, **poverty**, unemployment, and inequality through flagship bilateral infrastructure and energy projects. Key initiatives include the Gas-to-Power Project; joint gas exploration in northern Mozambique; South Africa’s equity and financing role in the Mpanda Nkuwa Hydropower Project; and the extension of the ROMPCO gas pipeline concession beyond 2030. The mission is also involved in major logistics and port-related upgrades, including the Ressano Garcia One-Stop Border Post (OSBP) development, rail maintenance cooperation, and participation in cross-border trade corridors such as Mapinhane–Pafuri and TRAC N4. These initiatives support energy security for South Africa and economic mobility for both countries.

Regionally and globally, the two countries maintain close geopolitical coordination, engaging regularly on issues such as peace and security in Eastern DRC, Cabo Delgado, Sudan, South Sudan, Tanzania, Malawi, Madagascar, and Guinea-Bissau. The mission reports ongoing dialogue on global conflicts, including mediation on Palestine-related issues, as well as cooperation in continental and multilateral candidatures. Mozambique remains a critical partner in South Africa's regional diplomacy, leveraging its geographic location, ports, and security challenges to reinforce joint action on terrorism, maritime safety, and regional integration.

On economic diplomacy, the mission highlights the launch of the South African Chamber of Business in Mozambique (SACBM), which strengthens private-sector engagement and supports South African companies operating in Mozambique. South Africa participates annually in the FACIM international trade fair, with the 2025 delegation including DTIC, SEDA, provincial growth agencies, and 20 SMMEs many from previously marginalised groups. Trade between the two countries remains exceptionally high: in 2024, South Africa exported R119.4 billion to Mozambique and imported R19.5 billion, totalling R139 billion in bilateral trade. The mission also notes significant South African investment estimated between R155 billion and R175 billion supporting more than 42,000 jobs. DFIs such as DBSA, IDC, and ECIC continue to finance major infrastructure projects, including LNG and national road and power developments.

The presentation also emphasises cultural diplomacy and people-to-people ties, pointing out Mozambique's popularity among South African travellers and the strong familial, linguistic, and historic links between communities on both sides of the border. Key cultural programmes include the Matola Raid Commemoration, Nelson Mandela International Day, Africa Day, and SADC Week events. These activities promote social cohesion, reinforce liberation history, and support long-standing cultural bonds between the nations.

Finally, the mission details major corporate services and operational challenges, including aging state-owned properties, an unresolved title deed issue dating back to apartheid-era registration practices, and strict budget limitations particularly the absence of a capital budget for renovations. ICT challenges (unstable internet, non-functioning Cisco systems, and outdated hardware) continue to affect operations and visa processing. Despite this, the mission maintains strong consular performance: in Q3 2025/26 it processed 202 long-term visas, 1,250 short-term visas, issued seven mortal-remains permits, conducted bi-monthly prison visits, and handled daily document

certifications. The mission concludes that continued parliamentary support is essential to sustain economic diplomacy, regional integration efforts, and consular excellence.

12. Bilateral engagement with the Zambian National Parliament Committee on National Security and Foreign Affairs:

The meeting opened with the South African delegation outlining the mandate of its Portfolio Committee on International Relations and Cooperation. The committee explained that its constitutional role is to oversee the executive and act in the interests of South African citizens. Oversight is enabled through structured tools such as annual, quarterly, and monthly departmental reports, as well as oral and written parliamentary questions directed to members of the executive.

Members of the Zambian Parliamentary Committee on National Security and Foreign Affairs showed strong interest in the South African oversight framework. Their input focused on understanding how South Africa balances executive accountability with a large international footprint of nearly 150 diplomatic missions. This sparked comparative discussions on structural differences between the two legislatures and how oversight mechanisms could be strengthened on both sides.

South Africa described its multi-platform public participation system involving community hearings across all provinces, media communication, petitions, and a Parliamentary TV channel. Zambian members noted that while they also use stakeholder consultations, they typically invite 15–20 organizations to make submissions and often consolidate inputs where repetition occurs. They expressed interest in South Africa’s broader and more legally demanding participation processes, especially the judicial review safeguards.

The South African delegation elaborated on parliamentary procedures relating to bills, international treaties, and the constitutional requirement for thorough consultation. Importantly, they explained that South African courts may overturn legislation if public participation is inadequate. Zambian MPs acknowledged this as a strong safeguard and discussed contrasts with their own system where legislative review is less susceptible to judicial intervention.

A comparative exchange took place on committee workloads. Zambia noted that their committees often process issues that span multiple ministries—foreign affairs, defense, and home affairs—leading to heavy workloads. In contrast, South Africa separates these responsibilities across different

committees. Zambian members highlighted their challenge of managing broad mandates with limited resources and expressed interest in South Africa's scheduling techniques, such as morning–afternoon splits and prioritization during peak workload periods.

Discussion then turned to the rotation of committee members. South Africa explained its minimal annual rotation policy designed to ensure continuity and preserve institutional memory. Zambian MPs noted that their system faces similar challenges in balancing renewal with expertise retention, expressing interest in how South Africa manages transition without compromising oversight effectiveness. They particularly appreciated examples such as the South African vice-chairperson who had served five years for continuity.

Zambian members asked detailed questions about how South Africa conducts formal parliamentary sittings in community spaces, including rural and informal settlements. They were interested in the logistics such as staff recording procedures, political party representation, and translation services. They noted similarities in their own outreach methods but acknowledged that South Africa's requirement for full nationwide coverage during bill consultations was more comprehensive.

The South African delegation outlined the processes governing the swearing-in of MPs, election of the president, and appointment of ministers. Zambian MPs compared these systems to their own and welcomed the clarity on how the South African model ensures continuous legislative oversight of ministers, even as members of the executive. They also noted the uniqueness of limiting two executive appointments to non-MPs.

The South African committee described its oversight visits to international missions and explained the regional approach adopted due to budget constraints, including the choice of Zambia for its historical SADC significance. Zambian members welcomed this rationale and reflected on their own experiences conducting oversight on foreign service operations. They provided input on shared regional diplomatic challenges and stressed the importance of institutionalizing cross-parliamentary engagement within SADC.

In closing, the Zambian delegation emphasized the value of inter-parliamentary learning, especially regarding public participation requirements, judicial oversight of legislation, and structured committee operations. They suggested pursuing more frequent engagements between SADC parliamentary committees to harmonize practices and strengthen democratic accountability in the

region. The meeting concluded with mutual acknowledgment of shared governance challenges and the benefits of continued cooperation.

13. Discussions

Committee Members sought clarity on several issues relating to the South African Mission in Mozambique, particularly regarding the Mozal smelter closure, its economic implications, and the IDC's financial exposure.

Members questioned why the IDC, holding a 32% stake after a R2.8 billion investment, was now vulnerable to financial loss and asked the mission to explain the diplomatic ramifications of the smelter's shutdown and whether South Africa should intervene or consider taking over the plant.

Members also raised questions about the three state owned properties in Mozambique, asking why they remained in deteriorating condition, why the 2017 court ordered deed transfer of the official residence had not yet been completed, and why the mission was still unable to renovate despite severe structural decay.

The Committee sought clarity regarding ICT and connectivity failures, including why phones could not connect to head office, why network interruptions halted DHA operations, and why basic equipment such as desktops and printers was malfunctioning.

Further questions were posed about staffing shortages, particularly the absence of a Head of Mission, the need for a full time maintenance officer, and the long-term risk of aging locally recruited personnel.

Members also requested clarity on border crime, specifically the flow of stolen vehicles, illicit cigarettes, trafficked weapons, and undocumented migration across Lebombo.

Questions were further raised about small scale cross border traders, including why SARS and SAPS were allegedly seizing goods without arrests and what support systems existed for informal traders dependent on the Maputo corridor.

Members sought clarity about foreign influence in Mozambique, including France and Rwanda's growing presence, the instability in Cabo Delgado, and concerns that Mozambique might be aligning away from SADC positions.

Committee Members sought clarity on Zimbabwe's political climate, asking how ZANU PF maintained a two thirds parliamentary majority and whether internal party factionalism particularly the tensions between the President and Deputy President posed risks to political stability.

Members also questioned the implications of the ruling party's push to extend the presidential term to 2030.

Members raised several questions seeking clarity on the state of the opposition, its fragmentation, and whether Nelson Chamisa's departure and the CCC split into three factions had effectively neutralised electoral competition.

The Committee asked for clarity on Zimbabwe's economic statistics, inflation trends, and whether official data accurately reflected realities on the ground. The members further probed how Zimbabwe could claim single digit inflation while citizens faced high living costs.

Members questioned access to essential services water, electricity, education, and healthcare and asked whether Zimbabwe's social indicators were worsening.

Clarity was sought regarding trade relations, specifically why Zimbabwe continued to owe large sums to South African companies including over R1.1 billion owed to SAA and how bilateral relations could be strengthened.

Members raised concerns about embassy operational challenges, seeking clarity on the severe budget shortages, dilapidated official residence, and the absence of key departmental staff such as SAPS and SSA officers.

The Committee questioned migration management issues, including the rising number of Zimbabweans living in South Africa, cross border crime, and challenges at Beitbridge. Members sought clarity on what Zimbabwe had improved and where South Africa lagged.

Members requested clarity on the conditions of South Africans abroad, particularly why missions had no funds for emergency assistance.

Questions were raised about crime, human trafficking, and border safety, with Members seeking clarity on the scale of vehicle theft, undocumented migration, and the movement of dangerous goods across borders.

Finally, Members asked how Zimbabwe's diplomatic requests such as the return of human remains and cultural artefacts were being handled, and what support Zimbabwe sought from South Africa within BRICS and the UN Security Council.

Members sought clarity on the purpose and expected outcome of the list of UNESCO supported institutions and relevant companies that the Mission is compiling.

The Committee requested clarification on the intent and diplomatic implications of the regional message concerning electoral conduct in Tanzania.

Clarity was requested regarding the challenges affecting Department of Home Affairs revenue repatriation, specifically the verification difficulties with the Mission's bank account.

Members asked for further details on the state of bilateral relations between South Africa and Tanzania, including their cooperation priorities.

The Committee sought clarification on the scale of South Africa's economic footprint in Tanzania, including the challenges facing investors.

Members requested clarity on trade imbalances between the two countries and the factors affecting Tanzania's market access.

Clarity was sought on the concerns raised by Tanzania regarding the repatriation of liberation struggle's comrades remains.

Members asked for more information on the implementation challenges of the Swahili teaching MOU.

The Committee sought clarity on the Mission's assessment of Tanzania's 29 October 2025 elections and the significance of the Enquiry Commission.

Members raised questions regarding operational challenges at the Mission, particularly ICT shortcomings and compliance pressures.

Clarity was sought on regional stability concerns and the Committee's role in parliamentary diplomacy.

The Committee asked for clarity on the Mission's split presence between Dar es Salaam and Dodoma.

The Committee requested clarity on the Mission's efforts to address challenges contributing to DIRCO's Qualified Audit Opinion.

14. Responses

The mission responded that the smelter would shut down between February and March, with Minister Ramakgopa having already engaged Mozambique, and that the closure was expected to strain diplomatic relations, cause local job losses, and escalate into a public issue.

In response, the mission explained that chronic maintenance needs were driven by the coastal climate, the capital budget had been zero for successive years, and centralised approvals at head office prevented timely renovations.

They further clarified that the deed transfer had been delayed due to staff turnover since 2017 but that the current CSM had met several lawyers, including the one who handled the 2017 court case, and expected progress soon.

The mission responded that the network was unstable, desktops often failed to reach their login screens, network cables sometimes froze laptops, and the mission lacked backup WiFi or any redundancy. They added that DIRCO system downtime completely halted immigration processing and that staff often resorted to laptops and USB sticks as workarounds.

The mission confirmed it was severely understaffed, with two vacant LRP posts, no EFI since 2023, and reduced political section personnel compared to previous years. They added that maintenance demands were heavy due to the large estate (including the 19-house Kaeletu compound), and that retirements among long-serving gardeners risked future upkeep.

The mission responded that cross-border criminal activity remained high, with AK-47s mainly entering South Africa from Mozambique and Zimbabwe, and that Lebombo had staffing gaps which needed urgent filling. They added that bribery at the border facilitated illicit crossings, and that vehicles stolen in South Africa were almost never recovered once smuggled across the Nkomati River.

The mission responded that traders from Etlan Zeni frequently travelled to Maputo to buy stock due to proximity, but red tape and enforcement practices disproportionately harmed them. The Committee was advised that formalising small-trader cross-border arrangements would reduce harassment and help combat unemployment.

The mission reported intelligence indicating misinformation from Mozambican officials, foreign troop deployments in the region, and a rising “neo-scramble for Africa” dynamic, in which global powers pursued mineral and energy security interests. They urged stronger diplomatic engagement to stabilise the region and recommended that South Africa consult France on regional security cooperation.

In response, the mission explained that ZANU-PF had consolidated power through by-elections, secured majorities in both houses, and continued to suppress opposition protests. They confirmed that factional tensions were real but contained through party directives, while the president publicly stated he would step down in 2028 despite internal lobbying for a term extension.

The mission responded that CCC divisions were severe, with one faction leader legally empowered to recall MPs, and that Chamisa’s January 2024 resignation further weakened the opposition. However, they noted that Chamisa’s “2026 Agenda” might attract some members back to his political movement.

The mission responded that although official inflation had indeed fallen, many Zimbabweans remained sceptical due to disparities between official and market exchange rates and persistent

structural poverty, with 63% of the population still living in poverty and youth unemployment close to 49%.

The mission clarified that although life expectancy had risen to 65 years and literacy stood at 93%, many households still lacked access to potable water, sanitation remained low at 42%, and electricity outages persisted, forcing reliance on generators and solar systems. They also explained that high school dropout rates, especially after grade 10, had increased due to costly registration fees, contributing to migration pressures.

The mission responded that Zimbabwe remained one of South Africa's main trading partners in SADC, with exports totalling R7.5 billion in 2025. They noted that debt repayment depended on Zimbabwe's economic recovery and continued diplomatic engagement through the Bi-National Commission.

The mission confirmed that inadequate budgets restricted activities to Harare, while the official residence required major repairs, with appliances and furnishings dating back decades. Staff shortages were acknowledged as critical, with no SSA representation since 2023 and no police official since 2021, compromising security cooperation.

In response, the mission stated that Zimbabwe had upgraded its side of the border post, while South Africa's infrastructure remained the bottleneck. They highlighted proposals for a third bridge at Musina and confirmed that migration pressures were driven by economic hardship, with an estimated six million Zimbabweans living abroad.

The mission explained that distressed South Africans averaging three per month often required repatriation or basic support, yet no departmental budget existed for such emergencies, forcing staff to use personal funds. They also reported that five South Africans die in Zimbabwe per quarter and that repatriation processes were often delayed by bureaucratic and resource constraints.

The mission confirmed that cross-border crime between the two countries remained a major regional issue and emphasised the need for stronger joint crime-prevention strategies and interdepartmental coordination.

The mission responded that the return of remains was ongoing through legal processes, and that Zimbabwe was lobbying strongly for BRICS membership and a UN Security Council seat for 2027–2028, with South Africa offering conditional support while balancing broader regional interests.

The Mission explained that it is compiling a comprehensive list that will be shared with the Government Tourism Liaison Committee (GTLC) to enhance collaboration in heritage preservation, tourism promotion, and investment mobilisation. The Mission committed to conducting coordinated engagements based on this list and reporting back the outcomes to the Committee.

The Mission responded that a formal communication will be developed for submission to the ANC and relevant regional counterparts. This message will articulate concerns about the electoral environment in Tanzania and encourage further engagement through recognised SADC and AU diplomatic mechanisms to address issues regarding election conduct.

The Mission confirmed that revenue repatriation has stalled due to the bank's refusal to verify the account without completion of zip code and account authentication processes. Engagements with the Department of Home Affairs and the bank are ongoing to clarify preferred arrangements, resolve verification issues, and restore revenue flows.

The Mission stated that bilateral relations remain strong and grounded in historical solidarity, with cooperation spanning political, security, economic, investment, and cultural sectors. Both countries continue to promote Pan-African values and joint approaches toward improving peace, development, and regional stability.

The Mission highlighted that over 220 South African companies operate in Tanzania, with investment exceeding US\$600 million, while DBSA has around US\$200 million in infrastructural exposure. However, some companies have withdrawn due to double taxation, compliance delays, and other operational constraints, prompting bilateral interventions to resolve these barriers.

The Mission explained that South Africa remains one of Tanzania's main trading partners, with the trade balance favouring South Africa. While SA exports machinery, vehicles, steel, and other products, Tanzania's main export to SA is gold. Issues such as excise duties on online inputs,

recognition of OVT, and restricted agricultural export access continue to affect Tanzania's market participation.

The Mission clarified that Tanzania fears such repatriations may be interpreted as South Africa "taking their history." To address these sensitivities, a proposal has been put forward to establish a bilateral memorial in Morogoro, supported by private sector partners, to preserve and honour the shared liberation heritage.

The Mission responded that although the MOU has been signed, implementation remains stalled due to unresolved logistical issues relating to the deployment of Swahili trainers. Efforts are ongoing to address these constraints so that the agreement may be fully operationalised.

The Mission reported that President Hasina was re-elected with 87.6% of votes, but observers deemed the election below democratic expectations due to violent incidents in seven regions and the government's six-day internet shutdown. The Enquiry Commission, with a 90-day mandate ending February 2026, aims to investigate the causes of violence and develop recommendations for reconciliation and national dialogue.

The Mission acknowledged severe ICT constraints, including dysfunctional phones, outdated desktops, limited laptops shared among staff, and unsupported server-based systems. Despite these obstacles, the Mission continues to comply with required procedures while awaiting improvements.

The Mission informed the Committee that democratic backsliding in Tanzania and the broader SADC region contributes to instability and migration pressures. The Committee's leadership and diplomatic engagements through SADC and AU structures remain essential in shaping regional responses and upholding democratic standards.

The Mission noted that opportunities exist to expand direct flights between South Africa and Tanzania, particularly as SAA is not operating on high-traffic routes. Increased connectivity could strengthen trade, tourism, and investment flows between the two countries.

The Mission explained that although Dodoma became the official capital in 2019, most missions remain in Dar es Salaam due to inadequate social infrastructure in Dodoma. Quarterly visits are made to Dodoma, though these have been reduced by budget constraints. South Africa has been allocated land for future diplomatic infrastructure in Dodoma, while a modern chancery completed in 2017 in Dar es Salaam may generate revenue through rentals.

The Mission emphasised opportunities to expand collaboration with UNESCO-linked organisations, engage private sector partners, utilise the South African Transatlantic Community School platform, align initiatives with Tanzania's Vision 2050, and deepen DBSA-supported infrastructure cooperation.

The Mission acknowledged deficiencies in asset management, financial controls, procurement, contract management, and staff skills. It undertook to strengthen internal controls, improve compliance, and ensure better oversight of corporate services and financial systems, reporting progress back to the Committee.

15. HE Mr S Cachalia, High Commissioner to Zambia

The presentation outlines the longstanding diplomatic relationship between South Africa and Zambia, rooted in anti-apartheid solidarity and formalised through mechanisms such as the Joint Permanent Commission (1996) and the Bi-National Commission (BNC). High-level engagements including state visits by Presidents Mbeki, Lungu, Zuma, and Ramaphosa have strengthened political cooperation. The mission emphasises Zambia's strategic importance as a stable neighbour with deep historical and political ties to South Africa.

Economically, South Africa maintains a dominant position in sectors such as retail (Shoprite, Woolworths, Pick n Pay), banking (FNB, Stanbic, ABSA), and telecommunications (MTN, Multichoice) in Zambia. Bilateral trade has doubled from R30 billion in 2018 to R60.6 billion in 2025. Zambia's mining industry including South Africa's stake via Gemsfield remains central but also presents friction points such as surtaxes on tiles, pharmaceuticals, and duties on alcoholic beverages.

The presentation highlights major infrastructure and energy projects in Zambia, including a US\$600 million photovoltaic and storage plant, US\$700 million Lufubu Hydro project, US\$650 million Ngonye Falls hydro project, and a US\$363 million overpass road project. South African entities such as DBSA, IDC, and ECIC are involved in due diligence and financing, demonstrating deepening economic diplomacy and industrial cooperation.

On SMME development, the Mission is facilitating the finalisation of an SMME Cooperation MoU, intended to expand opportunities for South African small businesses. Through partnerships with agencies like Wesgro and TKZN, the Mission helps create export pathways and direct engagements between South African SMMEs and Zambian stakeholders, emphasising inclusive economic participation.

Domestically, Zambia continues to rely heavily on copper mining, which generates over 70% of foreign currency earnings. Despite drought, the economy grew by 4% in 2024, and is projected to grow by 6–6.4% in the coming years. Challenges include illicit mining, tax avoidance, and dissatisfaction from institutions such as the DBSA regarding debt restructuring terms. Politically, Zambia remains stable but faces constraints on opposition activity, tensions with the Catholic Church, and controversy around constitutional amendments passed in December 2025.

The Mission details its administrative, HR, and financial operations, emphasising compliance with supply chain processes and budget monitoring. Staffing levels show several vacancies especially in political and consular posts affecting operational capacity. ICT challenges persist, including unstable servers and slow systems that require frequent visits from local technicians. The Mission rents all its facilities, lacks state-owned property, and faces issues such as rental deposit refunds.

Consular and immigration services handle a significant volume of South African citizens estimated at around 10,000 in Zambia. The Mission processes 300 visas monthly, with ongoing challenges such as outdated printers and malfunctioning immigration systems. Consular issues include distressed citizens, lost passports, and prisoner monitoring. Despite resource constraints, the Mission maintains regular service delivery while highlighting the need for improved ICT, staffing, and equipment to meet operational demands

16. Defence: Zambia Mission

The presentation outlines the long-standing bilateral defence cooperation between South Africa and Zambia, anchored by the accreditation of the current Defence Attaché in May 2022 and supported by ongoing collaboration in military training and defence sector coordination. Central to this partnership is the Joint Defence Committee (JDC), established in 2002, which provides a structured platform for

both countries to deliberate on shared defence and security issues. The 10th JDC session, held in South Africa in March 2024, resulted in three implementation agreements focused on medical science cooperation, exchange programmes for directing staff, and student command and staff college exchanges.

Further consolidation occurred during the 11th JDC session in Zambia (01–05 December 2025), co-chaired by senior defence officials from both countries. This session delivered two new implementation agreements: one on defence industry cooperation and another on chaplain training. High-level official visits continue to strengthen ties, including visits by South Africa's Surgeon General (2023), the Chief of the Air Force (2024), and the Chief of Logistics (2025), as well as a reciprocal visit by Zambia's Air Force Chief to South Africa in November 2025. A future visit by the Chief of the South African Army is tentatively planned for March 2026. These engagements underscore sustained political-military collaboration and the sharing of best practices, including those related to food production in military contexts.

Defence education and training form a core component of cooperation. South African students are undertaking multi-year programmes in Zambia, including three SA Military Health Service students enrolled in a Nursing Diploma (2026–2028) and two students from the SA Army and Air Force attending Zambia's Senior Command and Staff Course in 2026. Conversely, Zambian students are pursuing defence-related programmes in South Africa, including studies in security and defence, warrant officer training, junior command and staff courses, and a three-year nursing diploma. One unresolved humanitarian issue remains: seven uncollected remains of South African freedom fighters still lie at Maina Soko Military Hospital in Zambia..

17. Discussions

Committee Members raised extensive questions seeking clarity on the structural challenges affecting South Africa–Zambia relations and why trade between the two countries remained heavily skewed in South Africa's favour and asked for clarity on the persistent non-tariff barriers, such as Zambia's 80% tariff on South African wines and duties on pharmaceuticals and tiles, despite both nations being part of SADC's Free Trade Area.

Members also sought explanations on Zambia's bureaucratic hurdles, slow permit approvals, and customs practices that hinder South African exports and complicate SMME market entry.

Members asked about cross-border crime, requesting clarity on the rise in stolen vehicles being trafficked into Zambia, human trafficking cases, fraudulent IDs, and corruption within border-management systems.

Members also sought details on the Bangladeshi/South African national involved in a trafficking syndicate.

Questions were raised regarding the immigration system, particularly why visa printers were failing, why handwritten visas were still being issued, and why study and visitor permit processing suffered long delays.

Members sought clarity on the shortage of ICT skills at the mission, the unstable server infrastructure, and long queues resulting from equipment failures.

Committee Members sought clarity on SMME cooperation, asking why the long-pending SMME MOU had not been finalised and what was blocking South African small businesses from entering the Zambian market.

Members also questioned whether Zambia's tax regime, including the requirement for a "Pakrah certificate" and tax PIN for repatriation of profits, acted as a barrier.

Members also demanded clarity on pharmaceutical trade barriers, questioning why South African pharmaceutical companies faced permit delays of up to three years, while Egyptian products were approved within six months.

The Committee asked questions about cultural cooperation, including whether formal cultural exchanges involving the Abangoni and Zulu communities could be institutionalised. They also sought clarity on how cultural diplomacy could support regional integration.

Members queried visa and biometric system upgrades, asking why SADC missions still lacked a standardised identification system and whether outdated census data affected reciprocal visa arrangements.

Further questions addressed the joint defence committee, with Members asking why it had not expanded to include countries like Mozambique and Tanzania.

Committee Members further sought clarity on the repatriation of South African freedom fighters' remains, questioning why some remains were still held in Zambia pending DNA testing.

Finally, Members requested clarity on governance, corruption, and political space in Zambia, asking whether political repression, party fragmentation, and media restrictions affected bilateral cooperation.

18. Responses

The mission responded that Zambia relies on South Africa for over half of its imports, but tariff and regulatory inconsistencies persist because Zambia belongs to both SADC and COMESA where South Africa is not a member creating overlapping trade regimes that often delay harmonisation.

In response, the mission noted that Zambia has become a corridor for undocumented migration and vehicle smuggling, with stolen South African cars often being dismantled and rebuilt before resale.

They confirmed that fingerprint verification through HomaFest is used to correctly identify suspects and that further investigation into the Bangladeshi case would be coordinated with South African authorities.

The mission responded that outdated biometric systems, non-specialist contractors, malfunctioning desktops, and ICT security vulnerabilities were the root causes. They explained that staff shortages combined with the main immigration officer being absent for five weeks further exacerbated delays.

The mission responded that the MOU was close to completion pending April engagements with Zambia's Minister for SMMEs, and confirmed that high local compliance costs, customs challenges, and Zambia's unpredictable tax administration discouraged SMME expansion.

The mission responded that Zambia's pharmaceutical market is loosely regulated, with widespread leaks from public hospitals into private pharmacies, and that corruption within the sector has led to the U.S. suspending some aid. These structural weaknesses contributed to slower processing for South African products.

The mission responded that cultural exchanges remain strong, evidenced by South African music dominating Zambian radio and high demand for Africa Day events; however, formalising cultural programmes requires additional resources and coordinated policy development across SADC.

The mission confirmed that outdated biometric technology and inconsistent census systems across SADC countries undermine border control and reciprocal visa approvals, and stressed the need for region-wide harmonisation.

The mission responded that seven sets of remains were still stored due to backlogs in testing within South Africa, likely located in SAPS forensic units rather than arts and culture departments.

The mission responded that discussions to broaden the committee were already underway, with Speaker H assigned to pursue expansion.

The mission clarified that Zambia's governing party has, since 1991, weakened the opposition through arrests, media limitations, and structural fragmentation. They explained that such internal political dynamics affected regulatory stability and economic policy continuity factors that in turn impacted South Africa's ability to advance economic diplomacy in the country.

19. Committee Engagement with the LRPs of the South African Missions in Zambia

During the oversight visit the Portfolio Committee held a constructive engagement with the Locally Recruited Personnel (LRPs). The meeting formed part of the Committee's broader mandate to assess the working conditions, operational environment, and overall functionality of South Africa's missions abroad. The LRPs welcomed the Committee and participated openly in the discussion, offering insights into their day-to-day responsibilities and the administrative operations of the mission.

The LRPs indicated that they had no complaints regarding their working conditions and expressed satisfaction with their employment at the Embassy. They highlighted positive working relationships with mission leadership and affirmed that they remained committed to supporting the mission's objectives. It is important to note that many of the LRPs have served at the mission for more than ten years, demonstrating a strong sense of loyalty, institutional knowledge, and continuity within the mission's operations.

20. Walk-about at the Chancery

The Committee delegation then conducted an inspection in loco and observed the office building. The delegation was taken to the strong room where it was shown the Consular section. The Committee delegation was further shown the asset register and the storeroom with assets to be disposed. The High Commission reported it was up to date with its registration of both movable and immovable assets.

One of the offices was used as a general storage for old, damaged and excess movable assets such tables, chairs, computers, TVs, sofas, fridges, beds and any other unused or unwanted items.

21. Conclusions

The Portfolio Committee's regional oversight engagement in Lusaka confirmed that South Africa's missions in the SADC region remain committed to implementing foreign policy and advancing economic diplomacy despite persistent structural constraints across finance, ICT, staffing, and property management.

ICT instability emerged as a central operational risk, manifesting in failing desktops, non-functional Cisco phones, intermittent connectivity, server vulnerabilities, and payment-related outages that periodically halt consular and immigration processing. These failures create reputational damage, extend visa and permit timelines, and weaken frontline service delivery at precisely the points where South Africa interacts with businesses, travellers, and distressed citizens.

The Committee concludes that ICT modernisation and reliable redundancy including connectivity backups are preconditions for credible service standards and must be prioritised alongside stronger vendor performance management and consequence management at DIRCO.

Staffing gaps and skills imbalances particularly in senior diplomatic, corporate services, consular, SAPS, SSA and ICT support roles continue to inhibit mission readiness and workload management. The Committee finds that targeted placement, accelerated filling of critical posts, and continuous skills development particularly in ICT and corporate governance are essential to strengthen internal controls and sustain service delivery.

Property portfolios require sustained attention: several missions operate from rented facilities while others face aging state-owned properties with deferred maintenance, unresolved title deed issues, or limited renovation funding exposing South Africa to long-term value erosion and operational risk.

The Committee concludes that clearing title backlogs, funding critical refurbishments, and tightening disposal governance are prerequisites for audit improvement and mission functionality.

Consular and immigration services remain high-demand functions that missions are largely fulfilling under difficult conditions, including outdated equipment, printer failures, and intermittent system downtime that force manual workarounds.

Overall, the Committee finds that missions are performing core diplomatic, economic, and consular mandates under constrained conditions, ICT fragility, staffing and property backlogs, and uneven consequence management continue to drive audit weaknesses and service inefficiencies.

22. Recommendations

In order to further assist the Department with enhancing its performance, the Committee recommends that the Minister ensures that the Department implements the following and reports to the Committee within one month of the adoption of this report by the National Assembly:

22.1 Ensure that structural, financial, and administrative obstacles that drive audit weaknesses and service inefficiencies in the Missions abroad are urgently addressed. These include ICT fragility, staffing shortages, property backlogs, unevenly applied consequence management, funding critical refurbishments, and tightening disposal governance. Provide a detailed quarterly progress report on steps taken to remedy the impediments.

22.2 Urgently address ICT instability which has emerged as a central operational risk. The risk is manifest in failing desktops, non-functional Cisco phones, intermittent connectivity, server vulnerabilities, and payment-related outages that periodically halt consular and immigration processing. These failures create reputational damage, extend visa and permit timelines, and weaken frontline service delivery at precisely the points where South Africa interacts with businesses, travellers, and distressed citizens. Provide a quarterly report on the updates regarding the implementation of the Digital strategy.

22.3 Prioritise addressing consular and immigration services challenges in the SA Missions in the SADC region including outdated equipment, printer failures, and intermittent system downtime that force manual issuance of visas. Provide a quarterly progress report on remedial action taken.

22.4 Accelerate targeted placements, filling of critical posts, and continuous skills development, particularly in ICT and corporate governance. Address staffing gaps and skills imbalances in senior diplomatic, corporate services, consular, SAPS, SSA as essentials for strengthening internal controls and sustaining service delivery. Provide a quarterly progress report on remedial steps on staffing backlogs.

22.5 Ensure the challenges regarding property portfolios under SA Missions in the SADC Region are addressed. Several missions operate from rented facilities while others face aging state-owned properties with deferred maintenance, unresolved title deed issues, or limited renovation funding exposing South Africa to long-term value erosion and operational risk. Provide a quarterly progress report on remedial steps taken to fully implement the property strategy at the SA Missions in the SADC Region.

Report to be considered.