

## SA Contributing to Stability Efforts in Africa

13 December 2016

The International Cooperation, Trade and Security (ICTS) Cluster is forging ahead with their vision to "Create a better South Africa, contribute to a better and safer Africa in a better world".

Among others, the cluster is contributing to the peacekeeping on the continent as well as maintaining its current commitments as per the decisions of the African Union Peace and Security Council and the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).

From tensions in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Lesotho to South Sudan, Pretoria is prioritizing its relations with fellow African States and ensuring that there is peace in these sister countries.

"We are all aware that our collective destiny is inextricably linked to the fortunes of the African continent, and we will in the year ahead continue to play an active role in continental and global affairs," cluster chair and Environmental Affairs Minister Edna Molewa told a media briefing on Tuesday.

The cluster was updating the nation on the progress made in the implementation of the cluster's Programme of Action (PoA) towards achieving the goals of the NDP: Vision 2030.

### **Democratic Republic of Congo**

Cluster Minister Molewa said they will continue their participation in the UN Peace Support Operation in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

"The South African National Defence Force supports the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo (FARDC) with training as well as assist with the implementation of their military strategy," the Minister said.

SANDF training FARDC is not a new task for SA Army instructors who have been training soldiers from the regular DRC for at least the past four years in terms of an agreement between the two countries.

Pretoria and Kinshasa have long standing relations dating back to negotiations to end the DRC's civil war, holding the first and second democratic elections, clearing ghost workers in the public service and expanding trade.

### **Mozambique, Lesotho**

In Mozambique, South Africa is involved in anti-piracy operations to help curb the increasing levels of piracy along the Mozambican Channel which have been reported.

It was the same in Lesotho, where the cluster promoted peace and stability in the Kingdom – where the SADC Double Troika helped the country with

capacity building through technical workshops Technical Workshop on Security Reforms and preparing a roadmap for Constitutional Reform.

### **Regional integration**

With regards to regional integration, the cluster reported that it is prioritizing relations with fellow African states in line with African Union Agenda 2063.

“We see regional and trade integration as a major building block for continental unity,” Minister Molewa said.

In this reporting period, President Jacob Zuma actively engaged his counterparts in cementing the country's bilateral relations with Namibia, Kenya, Zimbabwe and Botswana.

“The engagements were about evaluating how far we have come with regards to the regional integration programme.

“Under consideration is integrated infrastructure development programmes in amongst others, sectors of water, roads and energy, the movement of goods and services, evaluating trade flows, as well as the movement of people which includes skills capacity sharing and development.”

### **Southern African Customs Union**

To ensure that the regional integration comes alive, the cluster committed to continue using the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) as it remains an important instrument for industrialisation and economic development.

SACU is the world's oldest customs union with the primary goal of promoting economic development through regional trade. It consists of five member countries –Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, Swaziland and South Africa.

To advance the implementation of the regional development and integration agenda, President Zuma, in his current capacity as chair of the SACU Summit, conducted working visits to the other SACU member states.

The visits were about unlocking cross-border infrastructure, addressing supply-side capacities and promoting industrial development and value chains to stimulate regional growth and development

### **Tripartite Free Trade area**

Pretoria also supports operation of the Tripartite Free Trade area between the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the East African Community (EAC).

The Tripartite Initiative is aimed at strengthening the economic integration of the southern and eastern Africa region.

It is envisaged it will serve as a building block for the Continental Free Trade Area.

The COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite Free Trade agreement provides preferential market access for South African products to a market of approximately 700 million people and a combined Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of US\$2 trillion.

### **Regional trade cooperation**

As part of regional trade cooperation, Trade Invest Africa was launched in July 2016 to facilitate the implementation of an outward investment-led trade strategy into the rest of Africa.

In addition, agreements that promote economic cooperation on industrial and infrastructure development with other African countries, have also been negotiated. - **SAnews.gov.za**

[www.sanews.gov.za](http://www.sanews.gov.za)