CHAPTER V
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South Africa is active in the United Nations (UN), the African Union (AU) and the Commonwealth of Nations. South Africa is now a respected international citizen.\(^1\) South Africa was also one of the founding members of the United Nations, with its Prime Minister of the time, Jan Smuts, having written the preamble to the UN Charter. As a result of the country's apartheid policies, its UN membership was suspended in 1974.

In 1990, as part of the reformist policies undertaken by president F.W. de Klerk in South Africa, Namibia was granted independence, with the exception of the enclave of Walvis Bay, which was reintegrated into Namibia in March 1994. After South Africa held its first multiracial election in April 1994, most sanctions imposed by the international community in opposition to the system of apartheid were lifted.

On June 1, 1994, South Africa rejoined the Commonwealth of Nations, and on June 23, 1994, it was readmitted to the UN General Assembly. In 1994, it joined the Organisation of African Unity (OAU)\(^2\), the G-77 and the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). From 1998 to 2002, South Africa chaired the NAM and continued to promote South-South cooperation as a member of NAM’s troika\(^3\) until 2006 when it assumed the Chairmanship of the G-77. South Africa also advanced the North-South dialogue with the European Union and the G8.\(^4\) In its outreach to Asia at the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation and the New Asian African Strategic Partnership, both founded in 2006, South Africa tries to build strategic partnerships for the discussion of UN-topics based on a shared vision of developmental challenges. South Africa’s strategic partnership with India and

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\(^2\) OAU was replaced by the African Union (AU) in 2002.

\(^3\) The troika consists of the representatives of the past, present and future Chair of the NAM.

Brazil has a particular power to further the agenda of the South in dialogue with the North.

South Africa was a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council since October 2006 till 2008. South African votes in the UNSC have not been without controversy. The present chapter discusses about South Africa’s involvement in the United Nations in the post apartheid period. It also examines the role of South Africa in the Non-Aligned Movements (NAM), Commonwealth of Nations. In the later part of the chapter, Afro-Asian resurgence in the context of South Africa- Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) relation is discussed.

5.1. South Africa and the UN

The United Nations (UN) has historically posed a challenge to South Africa’s international relations. South Africa featured prominently on General Assembly (GA) agendas for a great portion of the latter’s existence, and Assembly resolutions were an important instrument through which international admonishment of apartheid South Africa was expressed. However, by the 1990s, the GA was one of the most important forums through which the international community’s rapprochement towards South Africa manifested itself as the country embarked on its path of democratisation.

For South Africa, reacceptance into the community of sovereign states was contingent upon resuming its place in the UN. In this light, the UN can be said to have occupied a distinctive position in South Africa’s early post-apartheid international relations. The GA accepted South Africa’s credentials only after the ending of apartheid in 1994. In the same year, Nelson Mandela stated that the elaboration of a new world order must centre on the UN and that the UN’s challenge will be to ensure that democracy peace and prosperity prevail everywhere. South Africa actively participated in the design of new UN institutions while coordinating its positions with other member states, especially those of the African Union (AU). The AU supported the creation of the Peace-

5 The India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Dialogue Forum was founded in 2003.
building Commission and the Human Rights Council (HRC). South Africa will reach the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) - one of the major challenges being to halt the spread of HIV/AIDS.7

At the same time, the UN was itself emerging from the bipolar rivalry of the Cold War. By the beginning of the 1990s, the UN, like South Africa, faced the challenge of grafting a new role for itself. In the twelve years since the end of institutionalised apartheid, South Africa has sought to do this by defining itself as a leader of the developing world. A strong focus on multilateralism in its foreign policy propels this. The post-apartheid South Africa's involvement in the UN can be examined into two areas. Firstly, South Africa's overall orientation to, and participation in, the various UN organs since 1994, and secondly the connections and contrasts with its wider multilateral foreign policy. These include the strong attempts by South Africa to use the UN as a forum to project or showcase itself as a representative of the developing world, and of Africa more specifically.

South Africa's UN involvement is strongly shaped by its desire to increase its global stature as a progressive and African power.8 The UN is an important arena for South Africa's rapid reintegration into the world and in the twelve years since its full re-entry into the General Assembly, South Africa has sought to increase its profile in the body, with varying success.

Thus in 1996, South Africa assumed leadership of the United Nations' Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) IX. In 1997, it was elected a vice-president of the UN General Assembly. In the same year, it became Chair of the UN Commission on Human Rights and Pretoria was elected to the council of the UN's Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), whilst also chairing the Session of the Preparatory Commission for the Implementation of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty.9 South Africa's Chairmanship of UNCTAD IX can be seen as the first expression of the country's active reintegration into the world organisation and of its intentions at the UN.

7 UNAIDS estimates that in 2005, 5.5 million persons (18.8 percent) were living with HIV in South Africa.
9 In addition to this, South Africa had also been elected member of the executive board of the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the UN Population Fund (1998-2000) and several other UN bodies.
In 2001 and 2002, South Africa hosted two major UN conferences, respectively, the World Conference Against Racism (WCAR), Racial Intolerance, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance and the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD). Given the size and high profile of the conferences, hosting them proved a major diplomatic feat for South Africa. The two conferences provided Pretoria with the opportunity to cast itself as a leader of the developing world and a campaigner for a transformed world order. South Africa's framing of itself as a leader of the developing world through such events as the conferences is part of an emerging tendency in its involvement in UN bodies and initiatives.

Next important South Africa's participation in major, middle power projects such as, the Global Campaign to Ban Landmines (or the Ottawa Process,) and the Kimberley Process, the nature, motives, dynamics, effectiveness and implications of its UN involvement can be examined. Pretoria's participation in the Ottawa and Kimberley Processes is a good example of middle power activism. With regard to the Ottawa Process, Pretoria played a leading role in many of the state negotiations that followed the initial campaigning by NGOs.

5.1.1. South Africa and UN Security Council Reform

The AU claims two permanent seats for African countries with veto rights, arguing that Africa is the only continent not being represented by the recent veto powers in the Security Council (SC). It has not presented candidates, but South Africa was a clear favourite along with Nigeria and Egypt. In 2007, South Africa was elected as a non-permanent member of the Security Council for the first time. Here, South Africa joined China and Russia in their opposition to a resolution on Myanmar; it is debatable whether it was a matter of principle or realpolitik when it did so.

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10 Cornelissen, n.6, p. 28.
11 The Kimberley Process began with NGOs, primarily based in Canada, pushing the issue of conflict diamonds as a major concern for human security. Actors from the non-governmental sector, the corporate world and state governments then came together to try and resolve what was fast becoming a major scandal in international commerce. South Africa, along with Botswana and Namibia, has economies heavily linked to the global diamond industry and Pretoria was keen to play a leading role in heading off any potential boycott of the diamond industry. The Kimberley Process was Chaired by South Africa and then quickly it became a major vehicle in seeking to clean up the world's diamond industry.
12 Kage, n.4, p.2.
The reform of the UN has been one of the issues that developing countries have collectively pursued in recent years. This has also been an issue on which South Africa has attempted to take a leading position, seeking not only to direct the debate and prioritise certain goals, but also aiming to gain a permanent seat on the Security Council. Pretoria first entered the debate on UN reform in 1997 when at the opening of the fifty-second session of the GA, the then Foreign Affairs Minister argued the necessity to ‘redress existing imbalances and transform (the UN) into a transparent organisation accountable to its broader membership.13

South Africa adopted the position held by the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) that proposed an expanded Security Council with Africa gaining at least two permanent and five nonpermanent SC seats and the elimination or extension of the veto. In recent years, more attention has been given to reforming and democratising other elements of the UN, on improving the role of the Economic and Social Committee (ECOSOC) and redefining the relationship between the Bretton Woods institutions and the UN system. More emphasis has also been placed on the ‘revitalisation’ of the GA. South Africa’s efforts to advance the Assembly’s role and authority are aimed at offsetting what it perceives as a shift towards unilateralism, triggered by the US-led war on Iraq and the increasingly peripheral position of the UN in the wake of this war.

The divisive impact of the competition for SC membership was demonstrated in an AU summit held shortly before the Millennium Review Summit, where several influential African states (such as Kenya, Egypt and Algeria) declared as ‘non-negotiable’ an expanded Council with the extension of veto rights to all new permanent, including African, members.14 Recently some African countries have started to criticise South Africa’s participation in the India, Brazil and South Africa (IBSA)15 Dialogue Forum, a tripartite body set up to lobby for the eradication of global economic and social injustices and a more humane face to globalisation.

13 Cornelissen, n.6, p.37.
14 This is in opposition to what is proposed by Germany, Japan, India and Brazil, the so-called G4 – the grouping that had thus far gained the greatest level of support in the GA for its reform vision.
15 IBSA was created on the premise that the three states are major players in the developing world and in their respective regional spheres, and that combined, they will have a greater ability in shifting international policy.
In Africa, leaders have taken Thabo Mbeki's attendance at the inauguration of the Brazilian president, rather than that of the newly elected Kenyan presidential candidate (which took place at the same time), as a negation of his professed allegiance to the continent's renaissance.

In this context, it is significant that South Africa has to date not actively sought to gain a non-permanent seat on the Council. This could be read as one means by which the country attempts to placate African fears while at the same time increasing support for its claim to a permanent seat. Overall, Pretoria's contribution to the deliberations on UN reform has been significantly shaped and constrained by the broader processes of intense political bargaining and jostling for positions of influence. South Africa will remain keenly interested in one area of the UN decision making: the possible reform of the Security Council to include new permanent membership. In this context, South Africa can be expected to be a strong competitor disputing, for example, Nigeria's claim on the seat.

5.1.2. South Africa and Disarmament, and Terrorism

South Africa has also been actively participating in the UN Disarmament Agreements, combating terrorism and other development programmes of the UN. When assuming the presidency for the Conference on Disarmament, South Africa urged member states to resume negotiations. South Africa, who entered major UN disarmament agreements, voted for the elaboration of an Arms Trade Treaty in 2006 and was one of the driving forces for the 2001 UN Small Arms Conference. The country has banned landmines in 1998 and destroyed its stocks two years ahead of schedule. It had installed a secret programme to build biological weapons in the 1980s, which was abandoned in 1993. In 1995, South Africa ratified the Chemical Weapons Convention.

South Africa distinguishes between terrorism and the legitimate struggle waged by people for their liberation or self-determination in accordance with the principles of international law.

16 Cornelissen, n. 6, p.38.
17 Kage, n.4, p.2.
18 South Africa wants to include topics like state terrorism, extrajudicial killings, extraordinary rendition and illegal detention in future debates on terrorism.

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5.1.3. South Africa and UN Environment Programmes

South Africa is committed to maintaining the political momentum gained in the sphere of sustainable development, through the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI). Comparing the goals of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) to the MDGs, it asks for a monitoring of countries' performance in the realisation of the JPOI goals. South Africa argues that desertification, land degradation, loss of biodiversity and deforestation are major threats to security and stability in Africa.

South Africa is an active participant in the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) and has ratified the Convention on Biological Safety, the Basel, Stockholm and the Rotterdam Conventions as well as the Kyoto Protocol.\textsuperscript{19} Various UN conventions for the environment, such as the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity are used by South Africa to meaningfully reduce poverty and, in so doing, meet the aims of the MDGs.\textsuperscript{20}

South Africa is firmly committed to the protection of the oceans and the sustainable management of its marine resources.\textsuperscript{21} It is seen that South Africa has an important role to play in these mentioned areas of the UN environment programmes.

5.1.4. South Africa and Human Rights at the UN

A commitment to promote human rights is one of the central considerations in the implementation of South Africa's foreign policy. South Africa is a major player in the development of international human-rights law at the UN. South Africa played an active role in the establishment of the UN Human Rights Council

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid, p.2
\textsuperscript{20} South Africa Year Book, Department of Foreign Affairs, (2008/09).
\textsuperscript{21} It has ratified all the major treaties dealing with maritime, fisheries and Antarctic matters, such as the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and its related instruments, the International Maritime Conventions, the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation Compliance Agreement, and the Antarctic Treaty.
(UNHRC) in Geneva, which replaced the former Commission on Human Rights.\textsuperscript{22} South Africa was one of the first countries to sign and ratify both the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its optional protocol, becoming a state party to the Convention in November 2007.

South Africa's foreign policy interventions on migration are guided by its adherence to the major international human rights instruments, including the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, and the various refugee conventions and conventions related to, among other things, the rights of women and children. Human right is a further issue on which South Africa has sought to increase its prominence in the UN. A strong commitment to human rights is one of the professed cornerstones of the country's foreign policy. Yet, as with many other elements of its foreign policy, its attempt to advance human rights internationally has been fraught with contradictions.

The theme of divisions between South Africa and other African and developing countries that counteract the country's claims to being a representative of the developing world is also one that pervades South Africa's activities concerning human rights at the UN. An early example of such discord was Pretoria's decision in 1997 to vote against a key measure by the People's Republic of China (PRC) that aimed to prevent its censure by the Human Rights Commission of its human rights record.\textsuperscript{23}

South Africa's vote against the PRC's blocking measure was significant in that Pretoria broke from the NAM, which voted in support of China. In the same year, South Africa broke ranks with other African countries by voting in support of a motion to have a UN investigation of human rights abuses in Nigeria.\textsuperscript{24}

Under Mbeki, South Africa's human rights policies at the UN have been much more in line with wider African and NAM standpoints, to the extent that it actively promoted the election of Libya as Chair of the Human Rights Commission in 2003 and rarely speaks out against human rights abuses in the developing world. South Africa, itself a member of the Commission until 2006, took the lead in

\textsuperscript{22} South Africa Year Book, Department of Foreign Affairs, (2008/09).
\textsuperscript{23} Cornelissen, n.6, p.39.
\textsuperscript{24} Pretoria in fact advocated the expulsion of Nigeria from the Commonwealth. Such stances were part of a more principled human rights-driven foreign policy, characteristic of Mandela's presidency.
nominating and garnering the votes in support of the North African country. In defence of widespread international criticism, the South Africa government justified its actions in terms of the goals of the African Renaissance, of which having Libya Chair the Commission was an important symbol of Africa's ability to transcend past failures.

Its activism on the International Criminal Court (ICC) notwithstanding, on the whole South Africa's participation on human rights at the UN has been informed and constricted by its larger political ambitions in other multilateral fora such as the AU, and as a consequence it has been ambiguous and has not enhanced its claim as an ethical leader. Indeed, a criticism of Mbeki's diplomacy is that he has allowed South Africa's commitment to human rights and democracy to be undermined by often cynical realpolitik. It is seen that despite various issues, South Africa has been contributing a major role in the promotion of human rights at the UN.

5.2. South Africa and the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)

South Africa joined NAM on 31 May 1994. Nelson Mandela pledged that South Africa would play an active role and seek to share with developing countries its technology, economic expertise and experience in overcoming divisions of wealth and race. With the end of the Cold War, however, the movement finally lost its role, to act as a 'Third Force' in the competition between superpower blocs.

South Africa is unlikely to place high priority on its membership of the NAM given more central position that organisations such as SADC and the Commonwealth will occupy in the formulation and conduct of its foreign policy. Like other states in the NAM, South Africa puts its own interest first, competing for Western technology, investment and trade with a host of rival claimants. South Africa is one of the current leaders of the NAM.

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25 Cornelissen, n.6, p.39.
26 Non-Aligned Movement (NAM): The first Conference of Non-Aligned Heads of State, at which 25 countries were represented, was convened at Belgrade in September 1961, largely through the initiative of Yugoslavian President Tito.
5.2.1. South Africa and NAM: History and Present Status

The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) with its 118 member States is the largest grouping of countries outside the United Nations itself, making of it an important lobby in global affairs. Since its inception in 1961, the Movement has played a crucial and highly visible political role in representing the interests of developing countries, particularly in the eradication of colonialism, supporting struggles for liberation and self-determination, the pursuit of world peace and the search for a more equitable and just global order.\(^28\)

The Movement also strongly supported the causes of democracy and justice in South Africa and from the outset South African liberation movements participated as observers in its activities. At its Ministerial Meeting in Cairo in 1994, in the same year that democratic elections were held, South Africa joined the Movement. South Africa soon after assumed the Chair of the Movement, when it hosted the XII NAM Summit of Heads of State or Government in Durban from 29 August - 3 September 1998.

During the next four historically eventful years South Africa sought, as Chair, to adhere to and advance the principles first enunciated at the 1955 Afro-Asian Conference in Bandung that led to the establishment of the Movement. It sought also to remain highly engaged in the Palestinian question and the evolving Iraq crisis, the challenges to multilateralism and the role of the United Nations. The Zimbali process at ministerial level initiated a review of the methodology and organisation of the NAM and the need for a revitalisation of the Movement. A new relationship was also established with inter alia the G8 and EU and relations with the G77 were strengthened.\(^29\)

During South Africa's incumbency the fortieth anniversary of the founding of the NAM was celebrated. The calendar of international events also included conferences for which developing countries needed to be well prepared in order to advance their strategic objectives. Of significance were the Millennium Round trade negotiations held in Seattle November 1999, the South Summit in Havana in April 2000, the Millennium Summit and Assembly of the United Nations in 2000


\(^{29}\) www.nam.gov.za
and the Durban World Conference Against Racism Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, August - September 2001.

South Africa handed over the Chair to Malaysia at the XIII NAM Summit in Kuala Lumpur in February 2003, and remained a member of the NAM Troika of past, present and future Chairs until Cuba assumed the Chair in September 2006. In August 2004 South Africa hosted the XIV NAM Ministerial or mid-term review Conference in Durban on behalf of the Africa-group.30

5.2.2. The XII NAM Summit, Durban, South Africa, 1998

The XII Non-Aligned Movement Summit was attended by 46 Heads of State or Government and 70 Ministers of Foreign Affairs. Of great significance was the presence of representatives of the Chairs of the Group of 8 industrial countries (G8) and the European Union, who for the first time attended a NAM Summit. The presence of representatives of the North block well for future dialogue between developing and developed countries and contributed towards a better understanding of the concerns and aspirations of the South.31

5.2.2.1. Political issues in the XII NAM Summit

With regard to political issues, the Summit reaffirmed the commitment of member states to nuclear disarmament, to combat mercenary activities perpetrated from their territories, to bring the reform of the United Nations to a satisfactory conclusion and to actively work towards the establishment of the International Criminal Court.

The Durban Declaration's chapter on global issues reviewed the international situation; the role of the non-aligned; North-South Dialogue; agenda for peace; restructuring the UN; UN peacekeeping; the UN financial situation; disarmament and international security; terrorism; and International law. The non-aligned expressed concern about intervention in their internal affairs under various pretexts as well as in the use of sanctions. The movement must be active in

31 More importantly, such a large presence of developed countries demonstrated the continued validity and growing importance of the Movement and its underlying philosophies.
international negotiations with strong concerted positions. They emphasised the importance of consulting with the G8 and shared concern at the weakening of the role and functioning of the General Assembly. They decided to convene a working group to prepare (by mid-1999) a complete Plan of Action for the movement.  

The Summit emphasised the gross under-representation of the NAM members on the Security Council and stated that its expansion must be determined on the basis of principles of equitable geographical distribution and sovereign equality of states. They called for an international summit conference under the auspices of the UN to formulate a joint response to terrorism.

5.2.2.2. Economic and Social issues in the Summit and South Africa

The economic and social issues are always important chapters in Non-aligned declarations. The final Durban economic chapter dealt inter alia with the new context of international economic cooperation; agenda for development; international trade and commodities; financial, investment and monetary issues; external debt; industrialisation; food and agriculture; environment and development; science and technology; information and communication; South–South cooperation; and the critical economic situation in Africa.

The participants made the point about the marginalisation of a large number of non-aligned countries under the impact of globalisation and liberalisation and the widening inequalities between rich and poor as well as reaffirming the importance of establishing an open and non-discriminatory system of economic relations. In an unprecedented move, South Africa also used one afternoon of the proceedings at foreign minister level to discuss the conclusions of the Ad hoc Panel of Economists.  

The Summit declared that the new global negotiations should be based on genuine interdependence, mutuality of interests, common benefits and shared

33 Morphet, n. 32, p.62.
34 The XII NAM Summit further adopted the report of an Ad Hoc Panel of Economists on Elements for an Agenda of the South.
responsibility. India called for a practical agenda of the South. South Africa stated the need to develop South-South economic linkages as well as engagement with the North. At the end of the Summit, South Africa suggested that the Chair of the NAM should be mandated to move forward in a consultative process with the NAM members to develop and strengthen the research networks proposed by the panel.

The final chapter on social issues covered inter alia social development; poverty eradication; health; education; labour; population; international migration; racism; advancement of women; children; youth; transnational crime; and international drug control. The Heads of State reaffirmed that human rights were universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated; that the international community must treat human rights globally in a fair and equal manner and that the significance of national and regional particularities and various historical, cultural and religious backgrounds must be respected. They considered it essential to make a distinction between humanitarian action and UN peacekeeping and peace enforcement operations, as well as operational activities for development. 35

The Summit also put out a four-page document entitled the ‘Durban Declaration for the New Millennium’. 36 Having reached consensus on these challenges and issues, the Summit mandated a process of identifying priority areas in which practical and action-oriented steps could be taken to advance the strategic objectives of the Movement. South African President, Nelson Mandela gave lustre to the non-aligned as he both opened and closed the Summit. In the opening of the Summit, he referred to the principles of collective self-reliance and mutual cooperation needed in Africa. South Africa hoped both to strengthen the movement and to contribute to its renewal.

"The achievement of our goals' Mandela noted 'depends critically on the collective interests of the developing countries being effectively addressed'. And, as he said in his final speech, the non-aligned was committed to a practical programme 'ensuring that the development agenda of the Southern countries finds a proper place in world politics and the world economy' which meant inter alia the

35 Morphet, n. 32, p.64.
36 This drew attention to their endurance of centuries of colonialism, oppression, aggression, exploitation and neglect and that NAM principle remained valid.
re-direction of the UN and other multilateral organisations. It is seen that various political, economic and social issues were discussed and South Africa took major initiatives in the XII NAM Summit in 1998 which was held in Durban, South Africa.

5.2.3. South Africa as Chair of NAM: 1998-2003

From September 1998 to February 2003, South Africa was serving as Chair of the NAM. South Africa continued as Chair for nearly four and a half years rather than the usual three because of problems about who should host the next summit. President Mbeki stated in April 2002 that South Africa had two goals after becoming Chair: 'increased co-operation among countries of the South and enhanced dialogue with the North'. In his opening speech, President Mbeki noted the non-aligned commitment to peace and disarmament within a global development strategy, self-determination, and poverty eradication including economic equity.

President Mbeki further noted the non-aligned contribution to the formation of the African Union (AU) from the OAU and the formulation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and stated that the non-aligned needed to prepare for forthcoming conferences by strengthening their unity and methodology and enhancing their partnership with the G77 and China. South Africa as Chair gave a report of the activities of the movement during its Chair to the Kuala Lumpur Summit in February 2003. It noted that the South African Mission to the UN had put out a statement on 14 September 2001 condemning the terrorist attacks (on 9/11) and recalling the section on terrorism in the 1998 Durban Declaration.

The report suggested that high level meetings useful to the South after Cartagena (2000) were the South Summit; the Millennium Summit; the Doha

38 Speech to opening session of the Ministerial Meeting of the Coordinating Bureau to Commemorate the 40th Anniversary of NAM, in Durban, 2002.
39 Morphet, n.32, p.67.
40 Ibid, p.68.
Ministerial round of WTO trade negotiations; the Finance for Development Conference and the World Summit on Sustainable Development.\textsuperscript{41} South Africa has certainly benefited from being the Chair of the NAM. It has been a learning experience and a good introduction to global diplomacy. However, South Africa's role as Chair of the NAM was not always easy as it was inexperienced in diplomacy in various areas.

5.3. South Africa and Commonwealth of Nations\textsuperscript{42}

The Commonwealth of Nations, or more commonly just the Commonwealth, is an association of sovereign states consisting of the United Kingdom, some of its former colonies, and a few 'special' cases. The Commonwealth Nations maintain close economic ties, sporting associations and complementary institutions. In the early twentieth century, the government of Britain was taking a hard look at its relationship with the rest of the British Empire, and particularly with those colonies populated by Europeans – the dominions. The dominions had reached a high level of self-government, and the people there were calling for the creation of sovereign states. Even amongst the Crown Colonies, Protectorates, and Mandates, nationalism (and the call for independence) was on the rise.

South Africa was prevented from continuing as a member after it became a republic in 1961, due to hostility from many members, particularly those in Africa and Asia as well as Canada, to its policy of apartheid. The South African government withdrew its application to remain in the organisation as a republic when it became clear at the 1961 Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference that any such application would be rejected.

5.3.1. South Africa and Commonwealth in the post apartheid period

South Africa was re-admitted to the Commonwealth in 1994, following the end of apartheid earlier that same year. South Africa's formal re-entry into the

\textsuperscript{41} The G77, South Summit was held at Havana, in April, 2000; the Millennium Summit, in July-September 2000; the Doha Ministerial round of WTO in November 2001; the Finance for Development Conference in March 2002 and World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 at Johannesburg.

\textsuperscript{42} The Commonwealth of Nations, normally referred to as the Commonwealth is an intergovernmental organisation of fifty-four independent member states, all but two of which were formerly part of the British Empire.
Commonwealth of Nations occurred at Westminster Abbey on 20 July 1994 and was dramatically reaffirmed with the visit of Her Majesty, The Queen – the head of the association – to the country in March 1995. What can South Africa expect from membership? 

A sense of solidarity with its third world neighbours in Africa and further in their governments struggle to come to terms with pressure of globalisation on fragile sovereignties and growing western indifference. South Africa is peculiarly placed in the Association as a bridge between the rich and poor members. The benefits to be derived from Commonwealth programmes of technical assistance and economic and social-cooperation.

South Africa has come a long way since the benighted days of apartheid that resulted in the expulsion from the Commonwealth back in 1961. During the anti-apartheid struggle, the Commonwealth of Nations played no small role in conscientising the whole world about the evils of institutionalised racism in South Africa. Over the years this community of nations painstakingly brought massive pressure internationally, in many different ways, to bear on the racist and repressive State.

The Commonwealth of Nations is an institution ideally placed to address such needs for common good, and to invest in the advancement of science, technology, development and poverty-reduction in a way that is conscious of the need for environmental balance and sustainability.

Since rejoining the Commonwealth of Nations in 1994, the democratic South Africa has been an active participant in the work of the Commonwealth and it will continue to hold aloft the principles to which this important institution adheres. These principles constitute an ideal foundation for a better world South Africa seeks to build.

44 Ibid, p.239.
45 Similarly, the Commonwealth can be an even more significant global player in fostering the arts, music, culture, literature etc because of its unique make-up and the way it spans different outlooks, political systems and cultures - in essence, drawing vitality from the enriching and vibrant diversity of its member states and their people.
South Africa made numerous contributions to the Malta Communique, in particular on issues relating to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the African Agenda and New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and addressing health, education and debt relief. South Africa also supported strong positions on trade liberalisation, climate change and terrorism. South Africa actively participates in the various ministerial meetings and governing bodies of the Commonwealth.46

5.4. South Africa and ASEAN47

South Africa’s relation with ASEAN countries is another important aspect of South Africa’s foreign policy in the post apartheid era. It can be seen from the background of Asia-Africa resurgence. The Afro-Asian Conference of 1955 in Bandung was the important beginning of Asia-Africa relations. Again in early 1990s, African countries particularly South Africa started bilateral relations with ASEAN countries. South Africa’s foreign policy towards ASEAN Countries can be examined two ways: (1) South Africa and the 8th ASEAN Summit, 2002 and (2) South Africa’s Trade Relations with ASEAN Member States.

Before we go into details of the South Africa and ASEAN relations, let’s examine a brief background of the ASEAN. ASEAN was established on 8 August 1967 through the signing of the Bangkok Declaration by Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. Five further members have since been added, namely, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam. The guiding principles of ASEAN are consensus and non-interference in the internal affairs of individual member states. Many of the ASEAN countries experienced explosive economic development in the 1970s, 1980s and early 1990s, which led to the description of them as "Asian Tigers".

47 ASEAN- Association of South East Asian Nations is a regional organisation of Southeast Asian countries. It was formed in 1967 by five original members and now it has ten members (ASEAN-10).
5.4.1. South Africa and ASEAN relations in the post apartheid period

The political and economic relations between South Africa and the ASEAN countries have been improved in the post apartheid period. South Africa maintains embassies and high commissions in six of the 10 member states of ASEAN - Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam and Philippines. These six ASEAN states and Myanmar (Burma) also maintain embassies and high commissions in South Africa. Singapore is an important member of the Indian Ocean Rim (IOR) of which South Africa is a member. Singapore has also played a leading role in formulating the New Asia-Africa Strategic Partnership (NAASP).48 This partnership mandated all Asian and African countries to give expression to their political relations by expanding trade and economic relations.

Vietnam plays an increasingly important role in South-east Asia and has vast economic potential and opportunities for mining, infrastructure development, and agricultural and manufacturing companies.49 Economic relations with Malaysia and Indonesia remain important, due to Malaysian investment in South Africa and the size of the Indonesian market. Malaysia has indicated its support for NEPAD and has sought to promote the Malaysian-initiated Langkawi International Dialogue aimed at expanding co-operation among countries of the South, including those in southern Africa.

South Africa and Indonesia were instrumental in the launch of the New Asia-Africa Strategic Partnership (NAASP) in Bandung in 2005 on the 50th anniversary of the Bandung Conference, which cemented Afro-Asian solidarity.50 There have been a number of exchanges of visits between South Africa and ASEAN countries since the end of the apartheid period.

5.4.2. South Africa and the 8th ASEAN Summit, 2002

The 8th ASEAN Summit, 2002 is one major milestone in the relations between ASEAN and African countries particularly South Africa. The ASEAN has invited to the African Union to address the important 8th ASEAN Summit, 2002.

49 South Africa Year Book, Department of Foreign Affairs, (2008/09).
50 NAASP, in the spirit of Bandung, represents a commitment by heads of state and governments to help build closer economic ties between Africa and Asia.
That was an invitation which has ensured to further strengthen the relations between two regions of Africa and South East Asia.

Looking back to history, Asian leaders came together with their African counterparts in Bandung, Indonesia at the historic 1955 Afro-Asian Conference, to define a common future for respective people. They sought to shape that common destiny by ensuring that together act on the basis of Afro-Asian solidarity, cognisant of the need for people to improve their lives and determine their place within the global community of nations through joint action, based on reliance on resources and collective strength. They projected the important vision of South-South cooperation as a central factor in the construction of a new world order.

Thabo Mbeki addressed at the 8th ASEAN Summit as "I believe that it is these same principles that have brought us to the 8th ASEAN Summit today. The challenge remains that we intensify our work together, to achieve the common objectives of the eradication of poverty, the building of developed societies and the occupation of our rightful place in a world that continues to be characterised by unequal relations between a developed North and a developing South".

The Summit gave the report of the important recent developments in Africa that bear on the pursuit of common objectives, to convey a message of solidarity to the ASEAN countries and to find ways by which can further deepen the cooperation between two regions. The Summit also discussed the progress made by the ASEAN countries in the effort to achieve regional economic integration, driven by the common objectives to intensify solidarity, peace and friendship among themselves and to act jointly to provide a better life for people.

Mbeki also expressed that South Africa will also greatly improve the capacity of the African Union to cooperate with ASEAN to respond to the universal threat of terrorism. The continued marginalisation of Africa from the

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51 These early developments, which reflected common determination to take destiny into own hands in the period after the collapse of the system of colonialism, emphasised the reality that the people of Asia and Africa share a common destiny.

52 Address by the President of South Africa and Chairperson of the African Union, Thabo Mbeki at the 8th ASEAN Summit, Phnom Penh, 5 November 2002.

53 It also expressed the believe that it would be important for that two organisations, ASEAN and the African Union (AU) initiate a process of the systematic exchange of experiences to assist the Union as it strives to achieve its objectives.
globalisation process and the social exclusion of the vast majority of its people constitute a serious threat to global stability.

5.4.3 South Africa’s Trade Relations with ASEAN Member States

The trade relation between South Africa and ASEAN Member States is another aspect of South Africa’s foreign policy.\textsuperscript{54} The ASEAN Countries are Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand.

The trade between South Africa and Brunei is minimal, with South African exports to Brunei for 2000 totaling R 9 181 584 and exports during 2001 R 7 734 081. No import from Brunei during this period was recorded. South Africa's main export items to Cambodia for 2002 included tobacco, mineral and chemical fertilizers, orthopedics appliances and hand tools. South Africa's main import items from Cambodia for 2002 included mainly garments such as overcoats, jerseys and pullovers and plastic articles. South Africa's main exports to Indonesia include prepared foods, pulp and paper, while importing the following products from Indonesia: vegetable products, fats and oils, plastics and rubber, timber, pulp and paper, footwear, stone and plaster. The biggest imports from Indonesia are textiles, which in 1998 amounted to approximately US$ 26 million.\textsuperscript{55}

The Laos economy is very small, mainly due to the country's small population, low level of development and lack of infrastructure. Trade and investment with South Africa is insignificant.\textsuperscript{56} Trade balance in Malaysia's favour by R924 million. South Africa is following a policy of constructive engagement towards Myanmar and is neither discouraging nor encouraging economic cooperation. Trade and investment between the two countries is relatively insignificant. However, opportunities for South African companies to invest in Myanmar abound, especially in infrastructure development, mining, steel, machinery, etc.

\textsuperscript{54} Total trade between ASEAN and South Africa (2001) is R 12988349809
\textsuperscript{55} South Africa Department of Trade and Industry (figures in R'000)
\textsuperscript{56} However, being resource-rich but infrastructure-poor, due to the country's geographic position and water resources, there are opportunities in road construction, railways, electricity development and mineral exploration.
South Africa’s main exports to the Philippines consist of base metals and minerals, paper and pulp, spirits and beverages. To South Africa, the Philippines exports fish products, footwear, electrical appliances, tobacco, etc. Philippines’s trade with South Africa (2001) is R 694 million. The exports and imports between South Africa with Thailand, Vietnam and Singapore has also been an important part of trade relations with these countries.

To conclude, South Africa has been playing an important role in different International Organisations. South Africa had started its role in these organisations particularly in the post apartheid period. In the UN, the issue of permanent membership to Security Council is an important agenda for new government in South Africa. South Africa has been actively involved in the human rights issues, environment and other development programmes of the UN. It also plays important roles in the NAM and Commonwealth of Nations. It has been found that, South Africa is now one of the current leaders of the NAM.

It has been seen that the Afro-Asian Conference of 1955 in Bandung was the important beginning of Asia-Africa relations. South Africa has been a key supporter of the Afro-Asian co-operation under umbrella of AU and ASEAN. It is also found that the political and economic relations between South Africa and the ASEAN countries have been improved in the post apartheid period.

The next chapter examines South Africa’s foreign policy towards India. It discusses the background of relationship between South Africa and India, emerging areas of coo-operation, India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Initiative, Indian Diaspora in South Africa, areas of discord between South Africa and India.

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57 Trade Statistics (all figures have been given in South African Rand)