Fact Sheet: Advancing U.S.-South African Cooperation

“[t]here are certain instances where the U.S. government and the South African government differ on approach but at the end of the day we share the same aims, we share similar values, so there is a tremendous amount of synergy.”

Ambassador Patrick H. Gaspard, South Africa

In June 2012, President Obama approved a Presidential Policy Directive (PPD) that outlines his vision for U.S. efforts in sub-Saharan Africa. The work of the U.S. Mission to South Africa has helped advance key pillars of this policy: strengthening democratic institutions, spurring economic growth, trade and investment, advancing peace and security, and promoting opportunity and development.

South Africa is a strategic partner and friend of the United States. In 2013, President Barack Obama visited South Africa twice coming after successful visits in the past six years by Vice President Joe Biden, First Lady Michelle Obama, and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, reflecting the importance the United States places on the bilateral relationship. In 2010, Secretary Clinton and Minister Nkoana-Mashabane launched the U.S.-South African Strategic Dialogue to advance cooperation on issues of mutual importance. Over the last four years we have held numerous ministerial meetings and four Annual Bilateral Forums, under which 14 working groups ensure concrete progress on shared concerns from education to energy to the environment. Some examples of our cooperation include:

Global Peace and Security
- South Africa and the United States work together on a range of issues impacting the region and the world. In 2012, we inaugurated a formalized mechanism for discussing cooperation, including non-proliferation, climate change, human rights, developments in Iran and Syria, and regional crises in Zimbabwe, Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan, and the Sahel. Dialogue under this Working Group on African and Global Issues is a mark of our shared commitment to cooperation on the multilateral stage, whether in the African Union, the UN Security Council, the UN Human Rights Council, the Nuclear Suppliers Group, the G20 or other international fora.

Health
- The United States has made an unwavering commitment to South Africans living with and affected by HIV and AIDS. Since 2004, we have invested more than $3.7 billion in South Africa through PEPFAR, including over $500 million in 2012, supplemented with an additional $40 million in 2012 to scale up medical male circumcision. Hundreds of thousands of lives have been saved, 6.8 million individuals have received counseling and testing, 720,000 pregnant women access services to prevent mother-to-child transmission, and 1.9 million individuals receive antiretroviral treatment. Under the Partnership Framework Implementation Plan signed in August 2012, the United States will continue to play a strong supporting role over the next five years as South Africa takes the lead in HIV/AIDS prevention, care and treatment.
- Another sign of our mutually beneficial cooperation on health was the recent launch of a Global Disease Detection Center, co-directed by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and South Africa’s National Institute for Communicable Diseases, with the mission to improve capacity to detect and respond to emerging health threats.

Education & Youth
- In 2013, USAID initiated planning with the Department of Basic Education to integrate innovations from the $7.5 million School Capacity Innovation Program (SCIP) into the national basic education system. SCIP is a public-private partnership between USAID, the ELMA Foundation, J.P. Morgan, and DBE, to improve teacher quality.
- In 2013 President Obama launched the Young African Leaders Initiative to promote young African leaders working in business and entrepreneurship, civic leadership and public management. Fifty South Africans, the largest number from any single African country, will participate in the first round of US based fellowship programs in 2014.
- In August 2012, Secretary Clinton announced a $500 thousand Opportunity Grants Program for South Africa to help disadvantaged students study at U.S. universities. This is in addition to the over $8 million that the U.S. Government currently provides for graduate-level Fulbright scholarships and other exchange and speaker programs.

Economic Development, Trade and Investment
- The United States is one of South Africa’s key trading partners, with two-way goods trade reaching $15.1 billion in 2013. The United States is the largest portfolio investor in South Africa ($70.87 billion in December 2012) and the third largest source of foreign direct investment ($12.14 billion as of December 2012).
- South Africa is a key export destination for the United States, constituting 29.2% of total trade with sub-Saharan Africa. South African exports to the U.S. were $8.4 million in 2013. More than 98% of South African exports enter the United States duty free under various trade preference programs, including the African Growth and Opportunity Act.
USAID recently established a credit guarantee facility for South African-based asset management firm Cadiz Life Limited, which will make up to $150 million in funding available to more than 300 small and medium enterprises and could help create over 20,000 jobs in South Africa.

USAID helped to establish South Africa's Supplier Diversity Council to champion procurement opportunities for historically disadvantaged businesses. USAID is also partnering with South Africa's Competition Commission and the U.S. Federal Trade Commission to build the capacity of competition agencies throughout the region.

During the June 2013 visit to South Africa by President Obama, leaders from U.S. government agencies including the United States Trade Representative, OPIC, USTDA, ExIm Bank, and USAID, gathered with business leaders from across Sub-Saharan Africa to work on options to leverage financial markets and U.S. government programs to develop infrastructure in the region.

Energy

South Africa and the United States share a commitment to developing clean, renewable, and efficient energy technologies. A $2 billion agreement between the U.S. Export-Import Bank (EX-IM) and South Africa's Industrial Development Corporation allows for credit guarantees for the development of the renewable energy sector. In February 2012, EX-IM signed an $805.6 million loan with South African utility company Eskom for the purchase of engineering and management services related to a new coal-fired plant. The U.S. Trade and Development Agency (USTDA) and the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) also support clean energy project development in South Africa, including with their U.S.-Africa Clean Energy Development and Finance Center, located in Johannesburg. A number of U.S. firms have won contracts under the South African Government’s renewable energy program.

Rule of Law and Democratic Governance

The U.S. Government is spending $1.7 million on bilateral law enforcement programs in 2013 and committed an additional $2 million in both 2014 and 2015 for training and support to South African government departments for victim empowerment, combating sexual and gender-based violence, border and port security, judicial capacity building, financial crimes, fraud detection, consumer protection, corruption, fugitive apprehension, LGBT rights, anti-terrorism assistance and women’s justice and empowerment.

A partnership between USAID, the MAC AIDS Foundation and the South African government is combating the scourge of gender-based violence through the expansion of Thuthuzela Care Centers in South Africa and in the region. These centers provide counseling, medical and legal services to survivors of such violence.

The United States and South Africa cooperate to bolster democracy in the region through 14 trilateral assistance projects that provide expertise to more than 20 countries in Africa on gender-based violence prevention, natural resource management, science and technology, constitutionalism in post-conflict areas, and other areas. For example, USAID has partnered with South Africa's Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) and the University of South Africa to provide training to elections bodies, including for the South Sudan High Elections Committee, a critical institution in Africa’s newest democracy.

The U.S. Government provided over $1.7 million in funding for security cooperation and law enforcement training programs in forensics, detective work, narcotics, counterfeiting, anti-terrorism and crimes against women and children, including human trafficking. Our law enforcement agencies conducted numerous joint investigations with their South African counterparts.

Military Cooperation

Military cooperation has long been institutionalized through the U.S.-South Africa Defense Committee, which has met on a regular basis since 1997. The September 2012 visit of South African Minister of Defense Mapisa-Nqakula to Washington to meet with U.S. Secretary of Defense Panetta signals the strength of this enduring relationship. We will build on the success of Exercise Shared Accord 11 during the next Shared Accord combined military exercise in July 2013, which will strengthen our nations’ capacity to conduct humanitarian operations.

Environment

The United States and South Africa will launch the South Africa Low-Emissions Development Partnership (SA-LED) in 2014 to promote Green Growth and lower greenhouse gas emissions in priority municipalities.

The United States is committed to stopping wildlife trafficking, a national security, public health and economic security issue that spans continents. The U.S. Government is providing policy and technical assistance to improve awareness, surveillance, detection, law enforcement, and prosecutions. The State Department has committed $3 million (part of $10 million for the continent) to enhance law enforcement efforts and support regional cooperation. USAID has launched a new program to combat illegal wildlife trade between Asia and Africa by strengthening trans-regional cooperation between the two continents, including combating wildlife poaching.