



Statement by Dr Naledi Pandor, Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of South Africa, on the occasion of the Ministerial Meeting of the Alliance for Multilateralism themed: "Our Commitment and Contribution to Building Back Better", 25 September 2020

Distinguished Delegates,

South Africa welcomes this discussion and hopes all of us will continue to ensure our global collaboration does serve the greater good.

Africa has been severely impacted by the pandemic and gains made over many decades have been reversed. Our Alliance should devote time in the future to devising effective support measures to assist the most vulnerable. African countries have welcomed the debt stand still that has been agreed for 6 months of this year.

Much more relief and support is required for our economies to recover, for jobs to be created and for new industries.

Women have been affected gravely by the pandemic - small and micro businesses have been destroyed by lockdown restrictions and the absence of financing for women's businesses - will make recovery slow.

Our alliance includes the most powerful countries and more can be done together to reverse the worst effects of COVID-19.

As chair of the African Union we have taken on the challenging goal of silencing the guns in Africa, our work together can help AU to achieve this important objective and create a foundation for development. Achieving peace in Libya, Palestine and Yemen would signal progress.

We welcome global initiatives aimed at developing a vaccine against COVID-19 - we have called for immediate and equal access for all and believe much more should be done to support research and innovation in Africa and to invest in health systems that can offer quality care and Universal health coverage.

Our Alliances should seek practical ways of building back better. The next global emergency should find us better prepared with stronger social protections, health systems and public services.

We should also work at ensuring digital inclusion as our digital inequality has been exposed as virtual communication came to play.

Our roadmap to recovery must include the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. We must therefore utilise this historic opportunity to not only confront the multidimensional challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, but to also ensure that all three pillars of sustainable development are advanced as we build back better to achieve a more just and sustainable future.

We require decisive, multilateral, coordinated and innovative action from all of us, putting our citizens, especially the most vulnerable, first. Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls should also be at the centre of all our post-COVID recovery programmes.

It is imperative that recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic leverages synergies and complementarities between social, economic and environmental measures, for a holistic response to the crisis.

South Africa endorses the Alliance's Declaration of Principles, which outlines the Alliance's political framework and objectives based on three actions, namely, to protect, preserve and advance international law and agreements; to drive initiatives in support of strengthening the multilateral system; and to reform existing international institutions, in order to make them more inclusive, representative, and effective in delivering tangible results to the peoples of the world.

South Africa will continue to work with the members of the Alliance for Multilateralism in creating a just, humane and equitable world and a rules-based international system of global governance.

ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND COOPERATION

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