

A Ten Year Review of the Foreign Service Institute

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Executive Summary

South Africa's re-entry into the international arena in 1994 required, among other things, that the country open missions in countries that had no diplomatic relations with South Africa. There was thus a need for the country to have diplomatic representation in those countries. As a result, the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) was reoriented as an institution responsible for the training of South African diplomats.

It is now almost ten years since the reorientation of the FSI, yet it continues to experience serious problems, such as a lack of leadership, and the inability to produce diplomats with highly specialised knowledge in a variety of diplomatic areas. While some of South Africa's diplomats perform their diplomatic duties exceptionally well, many diplomats trained by the Institute find themselves in situations where they have to perform with a lack of crucial skills, such as understanding African and international relations substantive issues, mastery of foreign languages particularly those recognised by the United Nations, mission administration and/or computer literacy.

This state of affairs calls for a serious administrative overhaul of the FSI and restructuring of its curriculum. Such an exercise would include the strengthening of its leadership capacity, creating curriculum development and monitoring mechanisms, and the forging of working partnerships with institutions of higher learning and research organisations, as well as granting the Foreign Service Institute semi-autonomous status. For this to be realised, there is a need for the DFA to give the FSI the serious consideration it deserves in terms of resources and other support. The study that culminated in this report, due to time and other constraints, does not fully investigate the magnitude of the challenges facing the country's diplomats, thus a more comprehensive study would be necessary.

Key recommendations

- **Transformation in relation to gender and race (See 5.1)**
 - *The impressive pace of transformation should be maintained. Should these trends continue, there is no doubt that the DFA's equity objectives set out in its 2003 – 2005 Strategic Plan would be met.*

- **Expectations, performance and challenges (See 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4)**
 - *Prospective FSI students should spend at least two years at the desks before they go for training at FSI.*

 - *The FSI should put in place an institutional mechanism that would allow the experiences of retired diplomats to be incorporated into its training programmes.*

 - *A curriculum development committee should be set up comprising experienced diplomats and academics, led by the head of FSI.*

 - *The current process whereby SAQA processes are being integrated into the curriculum and qualifications of the FSI should be continued and completed as a matter of urgency.*

 - *The FSI should establish a formalised strategic working partnership with a consortium of institutions of higher learning (or departments within such institutions) and/or other non-governmental research organisations involved in international relations.*

 - *South Africa's diplomats should expand their proficiency in foreign languages (especially French and Arabic).*

 - *The language curriculum at FSI should be reviewed, with a particular focus on the duration of language training, and an input of linguists at institutions of higher learning should be sought in this regard.*

 - *All prospective FSI trainees should have at least a bachelor's degree as a minimum requirement in order to be accepted at the FSI.*

- *In order to enable the FSI to fully meet its challenges its budget will have to be substantially increased.*
- **Development of diplomatic capacity and the role of missions (See 5.5 and 5.6)**
 - *The status quo should prevail regarding the structure of missions, as the representation of the various partner departments at a particular foreign mission depends on budget constraints, as well as the need for representation of a particular department at the relevant mission.*
 - *A more coherent communication strategy amongst departments that have representatives at a particular foreign mission or multilateral institution should be developed.*
 - *All heads of missions should at all times be kept informed of the activities of representatives of other departments operating from within their mission.*
- **The performance of FSI (See 5.7)**
 - *The position of Chief-Director should be filled as a matter of urgency.*
 - *The head of the FSI should be someone with a combination of academic credentials and practical diplomatic experience.*
 - *The FSI should be in regular contact with heads of personnel in missions or their heads to get reports on the performance of its graduates.*
 - *The FSI should actively engage in exchange programmes and information-sharing with its counterparts abroad.*
 - *The FSI should be awarded some level of semi-autonomous status. This could be done through the creation of a Board responsible for the management of the FSI. Such a Board should be constituted by members drawn from within the DFA as well as experts from outside the DFA.*

- ***The activities of the Language Institute (See 5.8 and 5.9)***
 - *Prospective foreign diplomats should be informed at the earliest possible opportunity of their posting in order to give them sufficient time to become proficient in the language of their host nation.*

 - *The budget allocation made to the Language Institute from the FSI budget needs to be increased in order for it to offer competitive salary packages*

1. Introduction

In 1994, South Africa rejoined the international community after many decades of relative isolation. In a very short space of time the new South Africa had to open foreign missions in countries and join multilateral forums where previously it had been unwelcome. This placed an enormous burden on the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) to staff these missions with well-trained and professional diplomats. After a thorough study of similar centres of diplomatic training all over the world, the FSI was reoriented in 1995 with the objective of serving as a centre of excellence where South African foreign diplomats can receive training for the purpose of representing South Africa professionally, as well as communicating its foreign policy objectives successfully.

It has been almost ten years since the reorientation of the Foreign Service Institute and this report is intended to serve as a review of the FSI in order to determine the extent to which it has lived up to its mandate to produce professional and well-trained diplomats capable of representing South Africa at its missions abroad.

The report will focus on the following areas:

- The extent to which the profile of South African diplomats has been transformed since 1994, focusing on race and gender;
- the expectations by government departments of diplomats;
- the challenges facing the country's diplomats in the context of the complex international environment and the country's foreign policy priorities;
- the capacity of diplomats to meet these challenges;
- the impact of the structure of missions on the achievement of the country's foreign policy goals;
- the performance of the FSI.

The findings and recommendations contained in this study are intended to inform the process of strengthening the Foreign Service Institute as is proposed in the Department of Foreign Affairs Strategic Plan 2003 – 2005.

2. Limitations

The time frame within which this report was completed did not allow a more comprehensive study into the understanding of substantial international relations issues by South Africa's diplomats. The report has however illuminated the need for such a study if the effectiveness of the FSI is to be comprehensively gauged.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Methods

A report of this nature is required to be methodologically systematic and logically coherent. This means that the set of research methods used must be clear and justifiable. This report relied on both quantitative and qualitative research methods. A quantitative method was necessary, as there are some aspects of the study that required statistical analysis of data for a conclusion to be reached. Some aspects of the research called for a systematic analysis of quantitatively immeasurable ideas, which necessitated the use of a qualitative method.

3.2 Target populations

The following target populations were interviewed for the report:

- Officials from the Department of Foreign Affairs (those who in one way or another interact or have interacted with the FSI)
- Both retired and serving diplomats
- FSI officials
- Trainers of diplomats
- Officials from the Department of Trade and Industry (specifically those who deal with foreign economic representatives)
- Current FSI trainees

3.3 Sampling strategy

The respective departments forwarded names of officials relevant to the researchers for interviews. In addition, the researchers further identified other persons from the different target populations who were perceived to be resourceful, but not identified by their respective departments. The table below reflects the number of persons interviewed per department or category*.

* The names of interviewees are not included in the report as the researchers guaranteed anonymity to them.

Table 1: Interviews

Department/Category	Number of persons interviewed
DFA and DTI officials	12
FSI officials	6
Trainers	5
Students	3
Both serving and retired diplomats	6
Total	32

3.4 Data collection

Questionnaires were designed and administered by the researchers in order to extract information on the six areas of investigation outlined in the Introduction.

As the interviews were interactive, other questions that were not necessarily contained in the questionnaires, but relevant to the research, were also raised. In addition to questionnaires, other documents relevant to the research, such as the outline of the curriculum and racial and gender statistics documents, were analysed.

3.5 Data analysis

The information in the questionnaires was analysed with a view to checking if there were any identifiable sets of opinions by the respondents in relation to the areas of investigation outlined in the Introduction. The information from the questionnaires was then juxtaposed with that extracted from the documentation analysed. It is from this that the key findings and recommendations of this report flow.

4. Language Institute

The Language Institute, a component of the FSI, was created with the purpose of providing foreign language training to South Africa's foreign diplomats. Although the primary beneficiaries of the training provided at the Institute are foreign diplomats, the services of the Institute may be utilised by any of the other government departments. The Language Institute has also provided language training to a number of SADC diplomats serving in South Africa.

Full-time language trainers are appointed as the need arises and as such the original trainers in French, German, Portuguese and Spanish have since been supplemented by two English trainers and an Arabic trainer.

The courses provided by the Language Institute can be divided into four broad categories. They are:

1. *Regular foreign language courses*

- Arabic, French, German, Portuguese and Spanish are taught in two 90-hour courses. Courses 1 and 2 which make up the total 180 hours of tuition are considered the absolute minimum required to achieve a *survival and courtesy* level of proficiency.

2. *Ad hoc courses*

- These courses are presented in consultation with officials whose dates of departure do not coincide with the regular foreign language courses. In other words, the *ad hoc* courses are special courses which are presented by the Language Institute in an effort to accommodate the schedule of transferred officials.

3. *Intensive courses*

- These courses were historically presented upon request. Intensive courses in complex foreign languages have in the past been presented abroad (for example in Arabic and Mandarin, in Cairo and Beijing respectively). Due to budget constraints these courses have been discontinued.

4. *Language proficiency maintenance courses*

- These courses are presented in accordance with the Language Institute's responsibility to assist officials in maintaining their acquired language proficiency. These courses can be presented in the format of conversation or newspaper-reading classes, and computer-assisted language learning.

5. Key findings

5.1 Transformation in relation to gender and race

It is clear from all available documentation and all DFA officials interviewed that transformation in relation to gender and race was a mammoth challenge to the ANC government in 1994. Regarding efforts to tackle the challenge, almost all DFA interviewees agree that:

- the pace of transformation accelerated in 2000;
- earlier attempts at transformation were frustrated by top officials within DFA who still showed allegiance to the erstwhile apartheid establishment;
- the process of transformation was further hampered by a high turnover of Directors-General within DFA. This turnover created a lack of leadership continuity with severe repercussions for the transformation process;
- the absorption of diplomats from the former TBVC¹, and ANC officials into the department left very little room to address the gender and race transformational challenge.

The above difficulties took place amid growing pressure on the department to transform. Thus the department was later compelled to move with speed. The following table reflects the pace of transformation.

Table 2: Diplomatic training participants since 1995

Year	Race	Gender	Total
1995	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 9 White*• 23 African*• Other²		51
1996	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 12 White*• 34 African*• Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 14 Female*• 30 Male*	54
1997	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3 White*• 13 African*• Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5 Female• 18 Male	23
1998	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3 White	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 10 Female	22

¹ Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei

² Other refers to Indians and Coloureds or unclear specification.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16 African • 2 Indian • 1 Coloured 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 Male 	
1999	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 White • 23 African • 4 Indian • 4 Coloured 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13 Female • 25 Male 	38
2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 White • 17 African • 6 Indian 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 Female • 19 Male 	29
2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 White • 13 African • 5 Indian 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 Female • 18 Male 	22
2002			
2003			

* approximate figures

An analysis of the statistical data on the FSI training programmes suggests that the FSI has registered impressive progress regarding transformation in relation to race and gender. The participation level of Africans in the diplomatic training programmes has averaged 80% over the period under review. During the same period the participation level of women in the same programmes has averaged 30%. Given South Africa's historical racial context this progress has to be commended. However, keeping in mind the country's demographic profile this process of transformation should be accelerated, especially with regard to gender representivity.

The table below provides a summary of the manner in which posting of junior diplomatic staff has since unfolded in relation to gender and race.

Table 3: Posting of FSI trained persons to missions (excluding heads of missions)³

Year	Race	Gender	Total
1994/95	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 White • 1 African • 1 Indian 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 Female • 1 Male 	6
1995/96	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 White • 2 African • 1 Coloured 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 Female • 4 Male 	5
1996/97	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 White • 12 African • 1 Coloured 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 Female • 5 Male 	14
1997/98	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 White • 3 African 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 Female • 1 Male 	6
1998/99	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 White • 2 African • 1 Coloured 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 Female • 1 Male 	4
2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18 African • 1 Indian • 1 Coloured 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 Female • 9 Male 	19
2001			
2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 African • 1 Coloured 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0 Female • 5 Male 	5
2003			

The progress made with regard to the participation of Africans and women in the training programmes of the FSI also translates into the posting of junior diplomatic staff to missions abroad. It must however be noted that the racial transformation in terms of the posting of junior diplomatic staff does not match the success achieved in the training programmes. Overall, there has been a steady increase in the number of

African junior diplomatic staff posted to foreign missions. Substantial progress has been registered regarding the representation of women in the deployment of junior diplomatic staff, averaging 55% over the period under review.

The table hereunder summarises gender and racial representation in the deployment of heads of mission.

Table 4: FSI-trained heads of missions in terms of race and gender⁴

Year	Race	Gender	Total
1999	1 White 2 African 1 Coloured	1 Female 3 Male	4
2000	7 African 2 Indian 1 Coloured	1 Female 9 Male	10
2001	4 White 11 African 2 Indian	6 Female 11 Male	17
2002	1 White 3 African 1 Coloured	1 Female 4 Male	5
2003	2 African 1 Coloured	2 Female 1 Male	3

The deployment of heads of mission is an area over which the DFA has no control, as it is the head of state who handles that responsibility. However, even in this area, outstanding progress has been made regarding the representation of Africans, females and other minority groups such as Indians and Coloureds.

³ According to the source from which this data was extracted the figures provided in this table are incomplete. However, the figures do give a picture of the pace of transformation in relation to gender and race.

⁴ Information before 1999 was not available at the time when the study was conducted. The available data does, however, paint a sufficient picture of the general trends.

5.2 What relevant government departments expect from South Africa's foreign diplomats

From interviews with officials it has been determined that the relevant departments expect diplomats to:

- promote the principles of Nepad and the African Union
- understand and promote South Africa's foreign policy goals;
- contribute meaningfully to the transformation of multilateral institutions for the creation of a fair and just world;
- understand South Africa's values and sell them abroad;
- have a clear grasp of the strategic vision of South Africa's government and project a positive image of it abroad;
- contribute to the attraction of foreign investors into the country;
- conduct themselves in a manner that portrays South Africans as people of rich cultural values, respect and modesty;
- promote South Africa internationally as a premier tourist destination; and
- contribute to the deconstruction of Afro-pessimism.

5.3 The measurability of the performance of South Africa's diplomats.

The question of whether it is possible to measure the performance of diplomats is an important one. In this regard, the following emerged from the interviews conducted:

- there appeared to be consensus among most respondents that the performance of missions and diplomats can be measured on the basis of performance agreements;
- respondents indicated that the ability of foreign diplomats to place the relations between the host nation and South Africa on a friendly basis would also serve as an indicator of successful diplomatic performance;
- respondents from the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) indicated that a rise in the levels of foreign direct investment (FDI) into South Africa should be attributed to South Africa's diplomats abroad. (While this view cannot be entirely refuted, its logic is highly debatable, as there are a multitude of other factors influencing FDI flows);
- it was also indicated by the DTI respondents that the number of telephone enquiries made by foreign nationals and/or companies seeking information on investment serves as an indicator of the work done by the country's foreign economic representatives.

5.4 The challenges facing the country's diplomats

Most respondents see the following as the major challenges facing South African foreign diplomats:

- It was generally felt that South Africa's foreign diplomats have an insufficient grounding on matters pertaining to the African continent;
- South African diplomats are perceived by most respondents to be largely unilingual as far as foreign languages are concerned;
- gaining a firmer grasp of substantive international relations;
- understanding South Africa's macro economic system and its location within the broader framework of the global economy;
- mission administrative skills;
- computer skills;
- writing official letters and reports;
- professional conduct.

5.5 The capacity of South Africa's diplomats to meet what is expected of them

The question of whether the country's diplomats are able to meet their obligations solicited different reactions from government officials and trainers interviewed, depending on the department(s) from which they come and, to some extent, their positions. The following summarizes the responses:

- A majority of respondents think that, given their limited resources, the diplomats are functioning effectively. This evaluation is made within the context of South Africa being a relative newcomer to the diplomatic stage, making it unfair to judge the country's diplomats against diplomats of other countries who have been in the diplomatic arena for a longer period of time;
- a considerable section of the interviewees believe that only diplomats at ambassadorial level are performing well, while junior diplomatic officials are weak;
- from the responses of diplomats, it would appear that the impressive performance by some of the country's diplomats is attributable to their experience as former ANC representatives in different parts of the world during the liberation struggle;
- there appears to be consensus that practical diplomatic experience is critical to developing diplomats

5.6 The impact of the structure of missions on the achievement of South Africa's foreign policy goals

The structure of missions is an important factor in determining the attainment of foreign policy goals. In this regard, the findings are as follows:

- there has been no significant change since 1994 in the way in which missions abroad are structured;
- some missions are unilinear in nature while others are cluster-like. This depends entirely on the various partner departments realising a need to send their representatives to certain missions on the basis of perceived strategic importance of the host country or multilateral institution;
- there is no coordinated government approach with regard to the representation of departments in missions;
- a majority of respondents indicated that departments should not have the power to decide on their own whether to send representatives to particular missions or not, but rather there should be a coordinated government approach in this regard; there is an overwhelming view among respondents that the absence of a coordinated approach has led to problems with mission coordination and lines of reporting between missions and head office.

5.7 The performance of the FSI

The FSI is important as an institution responsible for the training of South Africa's diplomats. On its performance, the following emerged from the respondents:

- an overwhelming majority of the interviewees think that the FSI has, since its inception, failed to live up to its mandate. These respondents indicated that the training received by diplomats from the FSI does not fully equip South Africa's diplomats to meet their challenges in the practical world of diplomacy;
- the majority of respondents indicated that the curriculum at FSI has serious deficiencies and that there is a need to revamp it.

A broad analysis (based on interviews and the documentation provided) of the FSI revealed that:

- in its early years, the FSI relied largely on external resource institutions to conduct its training;

- a majority of the trainees trained in 1995 and 1996 had diplomatic experience before they went to the FSI, as most of them had served as the ANC's representatives abroad during the liberation struggle. Thus their experience was more useful than the training they received from the FSI;
- most of these trainees had received training from other foreign institutions of diplomatic training before they were trained by the FSI. Thus the training offered by the FSI did not appear useful;
- experience appears to be more helpful than the training provided by the FSI. Most diplomats who have recently been trained by the FSI attribute their grasp of the diplomatic world to the time they spent at the various foreign affairs desks before they went to the FSI for training. It would appear that a longer stay at the desks would benefit prospective FSI students in terms of administrative and computer skills as well as writing official letters and reports. Furthermore, it would afford the DFA time to monitor (and if necessary shape) the conduct of prospective diplomats while making it possible for the FSI to act as a sharpener of skills, as most FSI students would have reached a higher level of skills
- although the curriculum of the FSI appears to have been improved in recent years, it still does not seem to fully equip diplomats with skills needed to meet their challenges;
- while the current (2003) curriculum looks impressive on paper, there appears to be a wide gap between what is on paper and what happens in the classroom. Furthermore, there is no room in the curriculum for the training of diplomats with specialised knowledge of issues as it is largely generic and designed for beginners with no background of diplomacy;
- one major weakness of the training at FSI is the lack of a mechanism to monitor, on an ongoing basis, the performance of recently graduated diplomats once they are posted to missions abroad. Such a mechanism would greatly enrich the curriculum, as it would then be possible to continuously incorporate new aspects based on practical diplomatic experience;
- another deficiency in the training is the lack of a coordinated curriculum development and monitoring mechanism. Should such a mechanism exist, it could be responsible for ensuring that the curriculum is brought into line with current diplomatic challenges and exploring ways in which training could be enhanced;

- It would appear that the curriculum (as it appears on paper) is never implemented as intended. Some respondents hinted that this could be remedied by increasing the length of time trainees spend at the FSI;
- a more frequently mentioned explanation is that the FSI budget is grossly insufficient for the effective operation of the Institute, and for the fullest implementation of the curriculum;
- there do not seem to exist formalised strategic exchange programmes between the FSI and its counterparts abroad. Were this to happen, it would provide the FSI with much needed exposure to foreign trends in diplomatic training and would have a positive influence on the standard of training at the FSI;
- since its inception, the FSI appears to have suffered from a leadership crisis. On a number of occasions DFA officials have served as acting heads of the Institute;
- from the responses of a majority of respondents, it appears that most people who served as heads of the Institute were either incompetent or never communicated well with trainers. This led to a situation where there was a leadership gap, especially in the critical area of curriculum development;
- while the placement of the FSI under a Chief-Directorate in 2002 was a step in the right direction, it appears that the problem of leadership continues to plague the FSI, even at present.

5.8 Timely notification of posting

The acquisition of a new language, even if only an initial basic proficiency is the objective, is a time intensive exercise. It is therefore very important that prospective foreign diplomats be informed of their posting as early as possible. This will make it possible for them to immerse themselves in the culture and language of their assigned host country for a sufficient amount of time in order to achieve a useful level of language proficiency.

5.9 Budgetary constraints at the Language Institute

The quality of instruction at the Language Institute is inextricably linked to the quality of its instructors and as such it is of paramount importance that the Institute be in a position to offer market-related salary packages to its language instructors. Currently the Language Institute is facing the situation where it is losing instructors to the private sector and academic community due to the fact that it is unable to offer competitive salary packages. Both the English language instructors have recently left their positions at the Language Institute and although these are in the process of

being filled, it is to be foreseen that without a budget allowing for competitive salaries the staff turnover at the Language Institute will remain unacceptably high.

6. FSI Programmes

The table below outlines the variety of programmes that the FSI has presented over the past nine years:

Table 4: Programmes carried out at FSI since 1994

Year	Programme
1994-1999	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main Diplomatic Training Programme • Mission Administration Course (This is a 6 month course aimed at equipping diplomats with mission administration skills)
1998-2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main Diplomatic Training Programme • Spouses Orientation Programme (This is a programme meant to familiarise the spouses of diplomats with the foreign environment and relevant diplomatic issues) • Mission Administration Course • Heads of Mission Orientation Programme
2001-2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main Diplomatic Training Programme • Mission Administration Course • Heads of Mission Orientation Programme • Spouses Orientation Programme

At the programmatic level, it would appear that things were not in good shape until 2000/2001 when efforts were made to systematically develop training programmes. A documentary outline of programmes implemented since 1994 to 1999 is not available. A majority of interviewees think that implementation of the programmes reengineered around 2000/2001 remains a serious challenge. The FSI is in the process of applying for accreditation by SAQA for three programmes, namely National Certificate in Mission Administrative Assistance: NQF Level 4; National Diploma in Diplomacy: NQF Level 5 and National Certificate in Mission Administration: NQF Level 5. This is a step in the right direction.

7. FSI budget

The following table reflects how the FSI has been financed since 1994:

Table 5: FSI budget since 1994

Year	Budget (R)
1994/95	
1995/96	1 185 000.00 (without Salaries)
1996/97	5 145 622.00
1997/98	5 503 075.00
1998/99	5 249 400.00
1999/2000	5 786 182.00
2000/01	5 391 500.00
2001/02	7 366 820.00
2002/03	8 070 000.00
2003/04	8 224 691.00

While the overall FSI budget has increased steadily since 1995 to date, it would appear that the budget is still insufficient given the magnitude of the Institute's challenges. It therefore seems as if not only an increase in the overall budget of the FSI is required, but also that the budgetary allocation to the Language Institute needs to be increased.

8. Conclusion

The idea of reorienting the Foreign Service Institute as an instrument for the training of South Africa's diplomats post-1994 was a noble one. It is unfortunate that after almost a decade following this reorienting the FSI has still not yet developed into a centre of excellence in diplomatic training. It remains plagued by a multitude of problems, as captured in this report. What is clear, however, is that there is a dire need for the FSI to be subjected to serious overhaul, if it is to reach better levels of performance. This cannot be achieved without substantially increasing the Institute's financial resources. It is imperative, therefore, for the government to inject more resources into the institute if it is serious about transforming the FSI into a world class platform of training, capable of producing South African diplomats who can compete on the world stage.

While this study is important, it could not, given the limitation highlighted in 2, investigate in a more comprehensive way those substantive issues that could shape the understanding of South Africa's diplomats of important matters such as:

- The political developments on the African continent such as the African Union (AU) and the operation of its institutions and processes;
- the New Partnership for Africa's Development (Nepad) and the dynamics involved therein;
- South Africa's foreign policy (for example, on Zimbabwe, the Palestine-Israel question, and other issues that require a higher level of intellectual and diplomatic sophistication);
- the workings of the global political economy and the location of South Africa therein;
- South Africa's location within the South and the South's interaction with the North.

These are some of the critical foreign policy areas around which the preparedness of South Africa's diplomats still needs to be tested. For that reason, a further study remains critically important if a broader view is to be gained on the capacity of the country's diplomats to grasp important international relations dynamics that are firmly placed within the practice of diplomacy. Such a study would need to be more conceptual and substantive. It is recommended that the study be conducted by an independent research organisation.