



**25 May 2021**

**PRESS RELEASE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY (CDP): BUDGET SPEECH OF THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND COOPERATION DELIVERED BY MINISTER NALEDI PANDOR ON 20 MAY 2021: A RESPONSE**

The Christian Democratic Party (CDP) took note of the Budget Speech of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation delivered to Parliament on 20 May 2021 by Minister Naledi Pandor.

As far as the CDP is concerned, the speech could well have been delivered 20 or more years earlier. It contains nothing fresh and is really nothing but old hat, full of cliches. In fact, Minister Pandor *acknowledged it herself by stating in her opening remarks that: "The key focus for 2020 was the priority of silencing guns in Africa and advancing the economic participation of women. We were also committed to ensuring the implementation of all steps necessary to give effect to the African Free Trade Area Agreement and further implementation of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM)".* The ANC party and Government that she is a member of has after all been in power for more than 27 years and is clearly still struggling to put these issues to bed. It evidently will become unfinished business the day the ANC leaves power!

*It hardly came as any surprise that she singled the People's Republic of China (PRC) and Cuba out for special mention and praise. She referred to China as "one of our most significant trading partners" and emphasised that bilateral trade between the RSA and China increased from R413 billion in 2019 to R437 billion in 2020, without pointing out the nature of the products involved and that the balance is traditionally in China's favour. To be fair, she also referred to trade relations with other parts of the world, albeit vaguely mentioning ASEAN countries as well as the EU, UK and USA.*

*Old friends, like habits, die hard, and in the ANC's view "the people of Cuba continue to be victims of an unwarranted blockade that should be lifted by the new US Administration". She vowed that "we will continue to support Cuba and work closely with that solid friend". Clearly, business as usual! It seems that once in someone else's pocket, always in someone else's pocket, not calculating what is in South Africa's best interests! Brace yourself, South African taxpayer, for a continuation of handouts! Perhaps Minister Pandor can also assure the SA public that all the salaries paid to Cuban workers in South Africa land in their pockets and not the largest part in the Cuban government's!*

*Pandor lambasted Israel for its vicious attacks and bombings of the Palestine people and forced removal from their homes. She castigated the "world" for "granting cruel impunity to Israel". She felt that South Africa should support the International Criminal Court (ICC) in its planned investigation of the abuses of*

*human rights by Israel. Off course, this makes a mockery of the ANC's declared policy only a few years ago to abort the ICC after the Bashir incident!*

*In conclusion: Nothing much has changed and the budget speech is in the CDP's view again stacked with cliches with the ANC government in Pandor's own words boxing above its weight in international affairs and forums, focussing on the promotion of the values and ethos of our Constitution through advocating human dignity, democracy and equality!*

*The CDP can but remark: Who is fooling who? Practise also what you preach at home! We are afraid that what Pandor termed South Africa's "principled position on issues of the agenda of the UNSC" and its "relatively independent position vis-a-vis a peaceful resolution of disputes" thereby playing a "bridge building role in a divided UNSC", is but a figment of her imagination. Sadly so!*

Johan Kotze MA - Political Science

**CDP spokesperson on International Affairs**