

## CHAPTER SIX: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

The research question addressed in this research is: *‘To what extent is the Foreign Service Institute (the FSI) training programme relevant to the challenges facing a South African diplomat in the global context’?* It is against this background that this study explores the organization of the institution or organ of government responsible for the implementation of South Africa’s foreign policy, which is the DFA. Through the transformation and refocusing of the FSI after the 1994 democratic elections, a large number of resources have been channelled into the FSI to develop and present programmes that will equip South African diplomats to fully implement South Africa’s foreign policy and meet its international obligations. Despite all the efforts to build diplomatic capacity, the study was able to establish that many of the modules offered by the FSI have not been able to build the appropriate capacity that is required for diplomats to be able to successfully execute their mandate. This study suggests that efforts to address these shortcomings need to be pursued to develop an institution of FS training that is able to multi-skill South Africa’s diplomats. This institution further needs an appropriate structure that will enable it to develop diplomatic training programmes that are uniquely South African.

Work is ongoing in the DFA to review the FSI programme and its management structure in relation to the fulfilment of its mandate. This review effort confirms the finding of the study and points to the realization in the DFA that current diplomats are not sufficiently multi-skilled, especially with regard to the relevant public administration skills, to operate efficiently in the complex global environment. The prioritisation of the need for relevant training for diplomats and the high level intervention through the appointment of a committee by the DFA to guide the turning around of the FSI needs to be commended and encouraged. Such

measures will definitely result in the desired training programme including various management and leadership skills that South Africa's diplomats need for the successful execution of their mandate.

For many years, a generation of African leaders with their unique diplomatic skills such as Henry S. Williams, Nkwame Nkhruma, Jomo Kenyatta, Julius Nyerere, Kenneth Kaunda and Nelson Mandela have left a mark in international affairs due to their own unique diplomatic approaches to resolving international conflicts. These African leaders have also managed, through their various diplomatic efforts, to confront systems that were meant to create inequalities in the world according to race, and restore the pride of the oppressed through diplomatic engagements that were uniquely African. The adoption of some of their approaches as part of a new curriculum at the FSI will further enhance the multi-skilling process of building a unique South African diplomatic capacity to implement its foreign policy successfully.

## **6.2 SUMMARY**

Chapter One presents, in detail, a discussion of the research problem and setting. The chapter also includes the research question and research sub-problems. Also included in the chapter are the arguments that support the need for a study of this nature and the benefits that can be derived from the outcomes of the study. The organization of the study is included as part of this chapter. To set the context under which the study is undertaken, the research question, scope and delimitations are included in this chapter. The last element dealt with in Chapter One is the definition of concepts to be used in the research report.

Chapter Two focuses in detail on the research methodology used in this research study, and why the ethnography methodology was chosen as the appropriate methodology for research of this nature. All the activities that were undertaken in

identification of the sample group, formulation of the questionnaire, conducting of interviews and analysis of data are explained in detail in this chapter. Size of the sample and how the sample was chosen form part of this chapter. Other aspects addressed in this chapter are the methodology used in gathering data, the documentation, and the approach used in the analysis of such data.

Chapter Three presents a detailed literature review on the phenomenon under study. The role of government in national and international affairs is elaborated on in detail. The role of public administration in the implementation of government policy, nationally and internationally, receives attention. Basic public administration theories and practices that enable successful formulation and implementation of government programmes are explained in detail. This chapter includes relevant literature on the evolution of the process of diplomacy and its implications to governments all over the world with the dawn of globalisation. Attention is paid to the South African foreign policy objectives and the challenges its public administration faces in implementing those policies in a global context. SADC development objectives are dealt with in detail because the region remains the front line for the implementation of South African foreign policy. Furthermore, the failure of South Africa to successfully implement its foreign policy in SADC will be generally interpreted as a failure in Africa and the rest of the world. Examples of South Africa's diplomatic relations with other countries and in intergovernmental organizations, such as the UN, the AU, the WTO, the IMF and the WTO, are presented in this chapter. Chapter Three then establishes the skills deficiencies in many African public administration organizations that are continuing to erode the confidence in Africa's ability to participate fully and influence the making of and implementation of international policies. This has clearly limited the capacity for optimism in Africa's international affairs because its agenda continues to be determined by the developed world which uses their surplus resources to advance their own national agendas.

African governments are found to be lacking the resources that could be used to supplement the tertiary training of public administrators to receive relevant diplomatic training on the management of foreign relations. In a lot of cases, many countries in Africa, which do not have training facilities for foreign relations, appoint public administrators with generic public administration skills to the FS, without enhancing these skills with relevant diplomatic training. This has impacted negatively on the capacity of many African FS institutions ability to deliver on their foreign relations mandate. Chapter Three deals with South African foreign policy objectives and the DFA which is mandated to implement or facilitate the implementation of the country's foreign policy. Strategic plans that guide the work of the DFA in the management of the implementation of South African foreign policy including the development of human resources, and the structures and categories of South African missions and how they are staffed are also explained in detail in this chapter. Chapter Three further points out that South Africa is unique in its approach to foreign relations and its foreign policy is strongly biased towards Africa. It is therefore correct to conclude that the FSI training programme must be unique to the South African situation. Its modules must equip participants with the relevant leadership and management skills to successfully drive the regional (SADC) and continental agendas (AU and NEPAD).

Chapter Four provides a review of South Africa's human resources development regulations and policies with special emphasis on the training of its diplomats for FS. It is clear that the policies and regulations on HRD explored demonstrate the commitment of the South African government to build an efficient and effective public administration institution to implement its mandate. The three training programmes, offered by the FSI, the CFSI and the University of Malta clearly demonstrate that the skills required for FS are very broad. This study argues that this presents a challenge to the decision-makers to decide on a programme for FS training, based on what they need to achieve in their foreign relations. The

restructuring or re-orientation of the FSI, which is the first of its kind in the Southern African region, shows understanding by the South African government of the challenges it faces in ensuring that it has the right capacity to manage the implementation of its foreign policy objective. The FSI still faces challenges to continue to adapt to the new global environment by ensuring that its programmes take into consideration the new skills capacity requirements.

Chapter Five presents an analysis of the findings in respect of interviewees' views on the relevance of the FSI training for the successful implementation of South Africa's foreign policy. Arguments are presented on how informed research is enhanced by an effective methodology. The methodology used allowed the researcher to create a dialogical relationship with the other party that possesses the required information through communicative symmetry, open-mindedness and open-heartedness, responsiveness, mutual trust and respect in order to get honest responses. Views expressed by the interviewees are summarised in this chapter and some of the comments that were made are presented in the interviewees' own words. It is clear from the responses that there was a lot of enthusiasm from participants to take part in the research.

The ethnography methodology employed allowed the use of different techniques of inquiry and observation of things that happen in the diplomatic environment though listening to what people say and questioning some of these observations. This chapter covers key issues that were identified by interviewees as critical in enhancing their capacity for successful implementation of, or facilitation of the implementation of South African foreign policy. This study has established that the majority of interviewees are of the view that the FSI programme that they attended did not prepare them sufficiently for the demanding responsibility of implementing or facilitating the implementation of South African foreign policy.

The majority of interviewees indicated their tertiary education came in handy when they attended the FSI training programme and that enabled them to complete the course with ease. Despite all this, the realities of FS dawned on most of them only when they were posted to missions, because of their inability from the onset to fully comprehend what was expected of them. All interviewees felt that the critical aspect of their work is not the maintaining of political relations, but rather trade and investment promotion. It is important that these modules are given the attention they deserve in the FSI programme.

Another important element that a minority of interviewees highlighted was a module on Africa's political and economic situation, where this might focus on the economic and political dynamics in at least a number of important countries that hold the balance of power and impacts on the political economy of all the regions of Africa. A few interviewees felt that interface between government departments in the implementation of foreign policy needs to be accommodated in a separate module because it is so critical to the successful implementation of South African foreign policy. Such a module should also include the aspects of how missions facilitate and coordinate the work of other departments. This study highlights, through interviewees' views, the challenges that South African diplomats are faced with when implementing or facilitating the implementation the country's foreign policy, given the complex issues that they have to deal with. A field of specialization in training was found as being critical. It was further suggested by interviewees' that there is an urgent need to build capacity for specific aspects of diplomatic engagements such as environmental matters, international crimes, terrorism, regionalisation, and so on.

This study was able to point out the skills challenges for South African FS has to overcome in the implementation of the country's foreign policy and has pointed out relevant skills necessary for this purpose. This study points out that South Africa has attained a high profile in international affairs as a champion and leader

of the developing countries, and therefore a lot of expectations for the country's diplomats to provide that leadership in various diplomatic forums. These expectations will only be realized through the building of diplomatic capacity with the relevant skills to successfully execute the national and international mandate.

### **6.3 CONCLUSION**

Five important issues have been raised as areas which define the scope to address the research question. The five areas are: South Africa's institution of foreign policy administration and its foreign policy objectives; examination of global diplomatic practices; skills challenges faced by diplomats in the global context and relevant diplomatic training programmes to address the challenges; relevant public administration skills required for South African diplomats; and analyses and interpretation of the findings. In drawing up the conclusions of the study these areas will be used as a means to draw conclusions on the findings of the study.

#### **6.3.1 South Africa's Institution of Foreign Policy Administration and its Foreign Policy Objectives**

This study has shown that the political leadership of South Africa has made it clear in their utterances on foreign policy and their actions that the success of South Africa, both economically and politically '*to create a better life for its people*', is premised on the same happening to the rest of the African continent. The responsibility now lies with the DFA which is the country's institution of foreign policy administration and its FS personnel to ensure that this objective is realized. In order for this mandate to be successfully executed, the FS must be staffed with officials that are multi-skilled with the relevant public administration skills to efficiently and effectively deliver good service on the international relations front.



The structure of the DFA, its vision and mission are explored in this study. The DFA business plan is also included as an indication of how, through this framework, it intends to execute its mandate. In the implementation of foreign policy, diplomats at missions play a central role and this fact is reflected throughout the study. The structure and categories of missions and the generic role of each diplomat are further stated to show the impact each of the different categories of missions is supposed to have.

There is no doubt that with the changing global order and the creation of a new balance of power, South Africa's role in diplomatic affairs will continue to increase in its attempt to further consolidate its role and that of Africa in international affairs. These developments will place more demands on the country's diplomatic capacity to engage and attain this mandate. South Africa has indicated through action that it is committed to continue to build on this commitment and it is urgent that its public administration institution of FS tasked to execute this mandate has the necessary capacity to do so through the acquisition of the relevant diplomatic skills.

### **6.3.2 Examination of Global Diplomatic Practices**

The current global diplomatic activities have shown that in the past century diplomatic practices have changed significantly. With emphasis being on multilateral diplomacy and not on traditional bilateral diplomacy, diplomats have, therefore, found themselves being challenged. Diplomats are now expected to operate at both bilateral and multilateral diplomatic levels in order to successfully execute their country's foreign policy. Issues that are undertaken by diplomats have even moved away from mainly the traditional peace and war issues to complex economic and environmental issues. These have placed a lot of demands on the need for diplomats to be capacitated with the relevant public



administration, diplomatic and specialist skills that are a prerequisite to the successful implementation or to facilitate the implementation of their country's foreign policy.

Developed countries have been very successful in ensuring that their foreign policy is directed at ensuring their continued domination on global matters is further strengthened by the deployment of well-skilled diplomats in all their critical missions or areas of diplomatic activities. Developing countries have so far failed to build the relevant capacity of skills in their diplomatic institutions due to a lack of resources to create institutions of good governance for foreign policy implementation. It is important to note that this fact has continued to perpetuate the current imbalances of power in favour of the developed world in international affairs.

Intergovernmental organizations such as the IMF, World Bank and the WTO have emerged as critical foreign policy arenas for many countries. These institutions are seen as not acting in the interest of developing countries. There are still loud voices, including the voice of South Africa, calling for the restructuring of these IGOs to reflect the interests of developing countries. The fact is that developing countries are major deal makers in these organizations because of the number of countries they represent and are often used as a tool for the foreign policy of developed countries. The need for the diplomatic engagement by developing countries like South Africa to be backed by the relevant resources and relevant diplomatic capacity to ensure equity in decision making for their benefit of developing countries. Failure to meet these requirements will continue to impact negatively on the ability of developing countries to effectively engage in international affairs for their own benefit.

It is therefore critical that South Africa develops a viable institution of FS that is able to adapt to the current changes in global diplomatic activities to successfully

implement its foreign policy. With proper FS capacity, South Africa will further consolidate its position as one of the important leaders and spokes-countries of Africa, and the developing world and the spin-offs of such an image may result in the achievement of its foreign policy objectives.

### **6.3.3 Skills Challenges faced by Diplomats in the Global Context and Relevant Diplomatic Training Programmes to address the Challenges**

Case studies presented on diplomatic training by the Canadian Foreign Service Institute and the Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies of the University of Malta are essential in demonstrating the current trend in the curriculum content used by other countries and academic institutions in developing various diplomatic capacities. As indicated in the training programmes presented by these two institutions, there are various modules tailored to be presented to certain groups of participants for different outcomes. There is now one annual programme that has to be undertaken by all participants who will eventually be posted to different environments that demand different skills like currently done at the FSI.

What is suggested is that given the fact that approaches and practices of international affairs undertaken by governments differ from country to country, region to region and continent to continent there is a need for this to be acknowledged and accommodated in the development of the FSI training programmes. Diplomats need to be multi-skilled with strategic focus on the area they have been recruited to or identified for, whether in the bilateral or multi-lateral setting, to implement South African foreign policy. Whatever remodelling of the FSI structures and programmes is undertaken, this suggestion needs to be part of the new thinking.

#### **6.3.4 Relevant Public Administration Skills required for South African Diplomats**

This study points out that the recommended FSI training programme must focus mainly at building diplomatic capacity by equipping diplomats with generic public administrative skills such as negotiation skills, organizational development, management of organization dynamics, leadership, financial management, human resources management, governance issues, and governance institutions for the implementation of public policy. Other areas that must be included in the public administration module are regional governance challenges (SADC, SACU, and so on.) and continental governance matters (AU and NEPAD) because these areas impact directly on the successful implementation of South Africa's foreign policy in Africa.

It has been established in this study also that the current FSI training programme is inadequate in equipping South African diplomats with relevant public diplomatic skills to effectively implement or facilitate the implementation of South Africa's foreign policy. This study has identified a need for an FSI training programme that will be able to develop multi-skilled diplomats in various areas for successful implementation of its foreign policy. Furthermore, there is also an emphasis in the development of specialization diplomatic skills in strategic areas of South African foreign policy objective that will deal mainly with technical issues that are time consuming and very complex.

The process to reform the current FSI training programme needs to be encouraged with the aim that it will result in the development of a uniquely South African diplomatic training programme that will address the required and relevant diplomatic skills that are informed by challenges faced by its diplomats. Such a programme must be able to address issues of interest that South African diplomats are expected to pursue for national and African interests and the

interest of the rest of the world. The new FSI training programme will have to take into consideration other factors that form the basis of the art of diplomacy that is practiced internationally such as its processes, procedures, structures and approaches and emerging diplomatic approaches that result from the ever-changing global economic and political environment.

The suggested FSI training programme, unlike the current training programme, should be able to multi-skill diplomats with the relevant public administration skills that will enable them to operate and deliver the best outputs in the complex world of international relations. Due to the fact that South Africa, despite its national challenges, has assumed the responsibility of leadership and champion for the African continent in global affairs, the FSI training programme must reflect this in its attempt to build capacity that will be able to provide leadership when called upon. The current FSI training programme has failed in placing more emphasis on this fact and that has impacted on the ability of South African leaders to succeed in meeting demands for faster progress in creating economic development, peace and security especially in Africa to ensure a better life for its people and the African continent.

### **6.3.5 Analysis and Interpretation of the Findings**

There is an unequivocal acknowledgement by the majority of respondents that given the current challenges they are facing in executing South African foreign policy, they have fallen short due to the lack of relevant skills in the current diplomatic environment. Many of the respondents point out that the current FSI training programme has not successfully addressed the skills required for successful diplomatic activities. The current success in South African foreign policy is credited to the country's political leadership in international affairs. There is also an indication that to sustain South Africa's positive image in the resolution of global economic and political issues diplomatically, it is imperative that efforts

are made in the development of multi-skilled diplomatic capacities.

Many of the respondents were able to make suggestions on how the FSI training programme could be reviewed and improved in order to address the actual practical challenges that South African diplomats encounter in their daily work. Case studies presented in the study illustrating diplomatic programmes offered by other institutions further strengthens the need for review and improvement of the FSI programme as suggested by the respondents. The respondents are of the view that such a review and improvement will further strengthen missions' capacity to realize their foreign policy objectives.

## **6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

This study suggests the multi-skilling of South African diplomats through the development and implementation of a uniquely South African diplomatic training programme. This will enable its diplomats to overcome the challenges posed by the complex international environment in effectively implementing South African foreign policy. A number of recommendations that are made to assist in the remodelling of the FSI training programme have been suggested:

### **6.4.1 Rethinking the FSI Training Programme in the context of Public Administration**

South Africa has advanced policies and legislation for capacity building in the public service. Government agencies such as the SAMDI and the PSC have been established to be the custodians of some of the policies focused on enhancing capacity in the public service. The FSI was established solely to develop the capacity of the public service concerned with the implementation or facilitation of the implementation of its foreign policy. It is therefore critical that

this institution is appropriately equipped with the necessary structures and expertise to execute this mandate. Its programmes which are derived mainly from public administration and the existing legislation and policies must be able to develop diplomatic capacity that will be able to effectively implement South African foreign policy in any global environment.

**Issue 1.1:** This study points out that the skills required for the implementation or facilitation of the implementation of South African foreign policy, even though informed by same principles as those in the general public service, require additional public administration skills for diplomats to operate outside the national environment. In the international environment, many factors outside the national legislation and policies need diplomats with appropriate competencies and expertise to fulfil their mandates.

**Recommendation 1.1:** The FSI training programme should include a module on relevant leadership and management skills required for FS that must take into consideration the challenges of implementing foreign policy in an international environment and the uniqueness of South Africa's foreign policy approaches especially its leadership in Africa. Such a module should take into consideration this uniqueness and provide the necessary training intervention in building the relevant capacity for the successful implementation of South Africa's foreign policy.

**Issue 1.2:** Public Administration forms the basis of any government's public service. It provides the necessary framework for organizational development, human resources development, human resources management, financial management, performance measurements, strategic planning, policy implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Whether a public servant is to operate effectively and efficiently within the realm of national laws or policies, or within the international environment, it is critical that they understand the basic

principles of public administration which are in many form standard across the world.

**Recommendation 1.2: The FSI training programmes should include these basic principles of public administration, which include acquisition of skills on organizational development, human resources management and development, public finance management, performance measurements, strategic planning, policy implementation, monitoring and evaluation in order to create an effective an efficient governance capacity in the implementation of South Africa foreign policy.**

#### **6.4.2 Governance and Foreign Service**

Good governance is a process in which relevant institutions of government are well established and capacitated for achieving its service delivery objectives efficiently and effectively. The DFA, as a government organ mandated to achieve its foreign policy objectives, must also be established on the basis of good governance. It is therefore critical that proper institutions of the FS must be established and capacitated with officials who are multi-skilled to operate in an international environment to successfully execute its mandate. Failure to do that will result in inadequate service delivery which, in turn, will impact negatively on South Africa's international image.

Another aspect of governance that needs attention is the management of missions as the instruments to implement or facilitate the implementation of a South Africa's foreign policy. The findings of the study point out that there are some deficiencies in the management of missions which is cited as impacting negatively to their performance. Public administration provides a guiding framework of how to design an organization and capacitate it to fulfil its mandate. The important governance issues that are addressed through the practice of



public administration include, among others, organizational design and development, human resources management and development, financial management, strategic planning, performance measures, policy formulation and implementation and monitoring and evaluation. All these are an integral part of any organization and will determine whether such an organization succeeds or not in planning and executing its mandate. For any government organization to attain good governance status, those who are in the leadership positions must possess the relevant skills to design and manage organization to realize their mandate.

**Issue 2.1:** The study findings indicate that a lack of capacity and resources, whether financial or human, hinders a missions' ability to fulfil their mandates. There is no doubt that the establishment by South Africa of more than 100 permanent missions within ten years has had huge financial implications. Missions will never be capacitated as may be necessary because the government will never have sufficient financial resources to achieve that. This study points out that the difference in categories of missions is used to determine the level of financial resources each mission is entitled to and smaller missions tend to suffer most.

**Recommendation 2.1:** To entrench good governance through good FS management and leadership, principles of good governance should be included in the FSI training programme to equip diplomats with the relevant skills to enable them to manage the realization of mission objectives with the limited resources. This will ensure that the limited capacity of a mission is not used as an excuse for failing to meet its foreign policy obligations. Skills acquired will enable each diplomat at the mission (from Ambassador to attachés) to do their bit in the realization of South African foreign policy objectives at missions.

**Issue 2.2:** Given the historical trends illustrated through an overview on international economic and political development challenges for developing countries in the study, it is very clear that globalisation has been directed to benefit the strong countries. In order to push further from the work that has already been done by the political leaders of South Africa to change this trend, proper structured FS governance institution capacitated with multi-skilled human resources is essential. This can be attributed also to the failure of the training process to expose officials to the principles of managing in an international environment.

**Recommendation 2.2:** The FSI training programme should incorporate international management as one of its modules. The module will empower South African diplomats with the relevant skills to develop and capacitate missions to function effectively even in complex environments and given the limited resources at their disposal. Their success in achieving this will depend solely on South African diplomats having the appropriate basic international management skills for good governance of FS.

#### **6.4.3 Understanding Leadership Role *vis-à-vis* Government's commitment to Africa**

This study has pointed out that South Africa has assumed a strategic leadership role as a champion and leader of Africa and developing countries, with strategic focus on Africa. It is with this understanding and commitment that a lot of South African government resources, both human and financial, are towards peace efforts, rebuilding and strengthening of institutions of governance at national, regional and continental levels in Africa. This study has demonstrated that efforts have already been undertaken successfully in several instances by South African political leaders in refocusing the global attention to the challenges that Africa faces in regard to peace, security and economic development. Issues that are

identified as negatively impacting on Africa's ability to engage the rest of the world are a lack of appropriate governance structures and diplomatic capacity in institutions of foreign relations, and it is therefore important that South Africa continues to play this role. These place a greater demand on South Africa's diplomats to demonstrate leadership competencies. A module on leadership for the implementation of South African foreign policy that is uniquely South African needs to be developed and offered at the FSI to enhance the leadership of those identified for FS.

**Issue 3.1:** Issues that are identified in this study as negatively impacting on Africa's ability to engage the rest of the world in dealing with the challenges that the continent faces are lack of appropriate governance structures and diplomatic capacity in their institutions of foreign relations and it is therefore important that South Africa continues to play this role.

**Recommendation 3.1:** Since commitment by South African leadership to champion the course for Africa's development has become a burden on its institution of FS, FSI training programme should be remodelled to include a module on building diplomatic institutions and capacity. Such a module must place emphasis on equipping diplomats with relevant tools and skills to be able to establish or re-configure missions to ensure successful execution of South Africa's foreign policy. It is therefore critical that such a module incorporates organisational design and human resources development to create the necessary capacity for efficient and effective execution of the mission mandate.

#### **6.4.4 Understanding Integrated Governance and the Implementation of South Africa's Foreign Policy**

This study has pointed out that there is currently a challenge for South African FS training programme to remain relevant in the current global environment with the complex issues that requires specialists' knowledge emerging everyday. Almost all government departments, in one way or another, are involved in both bilateral and multilateral diplomatic institutions in international relations matters that form part of their national mandate. Disagreements sometimes emerge between the DFA and other departments on certain international relations issues that seem to overlap between or among departments. Formation of clusters especially the one on International Relations, Peace and Security have been specifically geared towards the resolution of these conflicts. The cluster has limited success in integrating government work on international relations because of a major gap between the senior officials who participate at the cluster meetings and those who are responsible for the implementation of South Africa foreign policy.

**Issue 4.1:** The findings of this study indicate clearly that the FSI training programme has not incorporated the aspects of integrated government that are currently the central focus of the South African government to avoid duplication and conflict and accelerate service delivery. A South African diplomat must possess basic skills that will enable them to build important contacts in other government departments. These contacts will always be available to assist with relevant technical information and advice to enable them to undertake their responsibilities promptly and efficiently.

**Recommendation 4.1:** It is, therefore, imperative that the remodelled FSI training programme includes a module on integrated government vis-à-vis the implementation or facilitation of the implementation of South African foreign policy. Such a module will equip participants with the relevant skills

**and knowledge that will enable them to use other government departments' expertise appropriately in the execution of their mandate.**

#### **6.4.5 Information Technology as an Aid for the Implementation of South African Foreign Policy**

This study points out that, given the amount of information that is generated daily through 24 hour news channels and the Internet, it has become a greater challenge for any diplomat to provide a unique analysis in their areas of responsibility. A lack of proper analysis of issues that get picked up by the media and an understanding of the actual positions of government or institutions of intergovernmental relations may impact negatively on a government's ability to make an informed judgement or intervention. In any government organization, the policy formulation process is driven mainly by the gathering of relevant or accurate information. It is important to indicate that whatever information that is gathered remains a key factor that will make or break any policy formulation and implementation process. It is important to point out that a government takes action or certain positions on international issues based on the information provided by their diplomats in FS. Any government decision or action on international developments whether on bilateral or multilateral issues need to be informed by well-gathered, well-analysed and well-communicated information. Simple information such as NEPAD regional integration programmes maybe requested from a diplomat on issues of national interests that impact on some of NEPAD's programmes. A South African diplomat must be able to utilize the available information technology to access this information, package it accordingly and communicate it appropriately. A South African diplomat must be able to package information according to the level of the recipient of such information and the level of confidentiality required for such information.

**Issue 5.1:** Information is not only a tool for decision making for governments but also an aid to diplomats in implementing or facilitating the implementation of their country's foreign policy. In order for diplomats to make an informed judgement in certain aspects of negotiations, background information on the global trend on the issues under discussion may come in very handy. Skills in the utilization of information technology may reduce the time that it normally takes to put together such information which will empower the diplomat or a negotiating team of diplomats to remodel their approach informed by existing international trends against their country's national interests.

**Recommendation 5.1:** The FSI training programme should include a module on information management and utilization for diplomatic purposes as an additional diplomatic skill to aid the successful implementation of South African foreign policy. The introduction of this module will be in line with the existing international norm for diplomatic training programmes.

**Issue 5.2:** There is no doubt that diplomats' special responsibility includes listening, observing and studying for the development of a knowledge resource that is key to the successful implementation of a country's foreign policy but in today's world the role played by information technology in this regard cannot be discounted. The availability of information technology and the ability to use it has also empowered diplomats' ability to readily access and package information necessary for the successful execution of their country's foreign policy.

**Recommendation 5.2:** A module on Information Technology as an aid to the implementation of South African foreign policy should be offered as part of the FSI training programme. Information technology skills will enable South African diplomats, rather than rewriting what has become public knowledge, to critically analyse the provided information and undertake

**independent search for more information to collaborate their conclusions through the use of available information technology.**

#### **6.4.6 Strategic Verbal Communication and Writing**

There is a need to strengthen the ability of South African diplomats through proper training to be able to communicate clearly, verbally and write strategically. The study suggests that this can be achieved if the remodelled FSI training programme includes a module on diplomatic strategic verbal communication and writing. It is important, as has been demonstrated in this study, that one of the tools at the disposal of the diplomats in executing their responsibilities is the ability to accurately and strategically communicate orally and in writing.

Any intervention that a South African diplomat makes whether at a bilateral or multilateral level in pursuing foreign policy is based on the information and recommendations its leaders in government receive from their diplomats. Diplomats are the primary source of information and therefore their ability to communicate both in writing and verbally must not be underestimated because any miscommunication may result in the government making ill-informed statements or decisions that may have serious political or economic implications on its international standing. In other instances, countries may respond very slowly to regional, continental and global issues because of a failure in communicating their positions properly. There have been already a number of diplomatic incidents that have been pointed out in this study where countries had very serious deficiencies in the implementation of its foreign policy because of the inability of their diplomats to communicate strategically and accurately through their verbal briefings and written reports.

**Issue 6.1:** Any deficiencies in the ability of a diplomat to communicate or write strategically and accurately may seriously compromise the implementation of the



country's foreign policy. Without relevant communication and writing skills, South African diplomats will fail to appropriately report or brief their principals accurately and timeously. This may compromise their ability to do their work which will impact negatively to the realization of South Africa's foreign policy objectives.

**Recommendation 6.1: The FSI training programme should include a module on strategic verbal communication and writing to equip diplomats with the relevant skills to offer high level reports and powerful briefings that will enable the government to make informed decisions in the implementation of its foreign policy. Furthermore, these skills will provide the competencies to enable diplomats to execute their mandate effectively.**

#### **6.4.7 Thinking Strategically: Promoting Creativity and Innovativeness in Foreign Service**

FS is all about countries in many areas jockeying for different positions that come with different benefits. The processes that diplomats have to follow when implementing South African foreign policy may be slow depending on their innovativeness and creativity. Given the complex environment which is unpredictable and changeable every hour and day, week, month or year, and the distance from decision-makers in the capital city, a diplomat has to rely on their gut feeling to act appropriately in given situation. Such action, if not well thought through, may have serious implications for their country. It is therefore essential that diplomats are equipped with the relevant skills to not make costly mistakes.

South African regulations and policies on training have also reflected the need for innovation and creativity as a means to accelerate service delivery and attain the government policy objectives. The same needs to happen in FS as a public administration arena where a crucial action by any of the South African diplomats within the framework of its foreign policy is essential for the realization of the

national interests and ensure '*a better life for all*'. It is common that many of the diplomats will in most instances prefer to not act without getting authorisation from the decision-makers at head office which may result in the benefit that could have been accrued with speedy action being lost forever because of their failure to think strategically. This may have serious long-term negative implications even for future diplomats who will have to regret the lost opportunity.

**Issue 7.1:** This study establishes that strategic thinking and innovative skills are essential in creating a unique type of diplomat who will be able to independently or within a team analyse the environment on the issues that are placed in front of him/her, refer to their country's position on the matter under consideration and make an informed judgement that will not be questioned. Situations that arise at intergovernmental meetings or working committees between countries demand diplomats who possess strategic thinking skills. During the diplomatic process there are also deadlocks and disagreements on issues or the wording of communiqués or minutes. The ability to think above the opposite numbers and presentation of alternative wording or in-depth, informed explanation may ensure the adoption of your country's position even by those countries who were initially opposed to that. Such ability has also shown that the creative and innovative diplomat naturally earns the respect of their peers and is relied on if such an incidence arises again in the future. Diplomacy is all about winning opponents to accept a position or positions of your country and this will definitely impact positively to a country's standing in international affairs, thus enhancing the possibilities for successful implementation of its foreign policy.

**Recommendation 7.1:** FSI training programme should include a module on strategic thinking and how to be innovative to equip diplomats with the essential skills to make informed decisions in complex environments for the realization of South African foreign policy objectives. Innovative and creative skills will ultimately provide diplomats with appropriate

**competencies and expertise to deliver far beyond the expectations on their mandate.**

#### **6.4.8 Field of Specialization**

The findings of this study indicate that there is a need for areas of specialization in the South African FS. To be a generalist and multi-skilled is a must but in some missions, where certain foreign policy objectives are being pursued, there is a need for relevant special capacity to be deployed to enable the realization of these objectives. Public diplomacy has become a key weapon that is used to create a good image for a country that will ensure the realization of the country's foreign policy objectives.

**Issue 8.1:** Public diplomacy has become a critical strategy that is used to create a good image for a country to ensure the realization of the country's foreign policy objectives. Misinformation by national or international media on certain developments in South Africa, if not well managed may result in a negative image that is costly to the standing of South Africa globally and its national economy. Proper media management, whether foreign or domestic, forms a very critical aspect for successful foreign policy implementation for any government. Therefore, there is an urgent need for the development of public diplomacy skills in the South African FS.

**Recommendation 8.1: A specialization module on public diplomacy should be offered at the FSI and it must be a compulsory module for those diplomats that are identified for strategic missions for public diplomacy purposes to support the implementation of South African.**

**Issue 8.2:** This study established that the processes at IGOs like the AU, WTO, UN and its agencies, the IMF and the World Bank can be very complicated and

frustrating for a beginner. From the time of the posting to reach a stage where a diplomat is fully functional may take up to two years. Unfortunately, a diplomat's lifespan in one posting on average is only four years. These IGOs have complex procedures and use a different technical language in their deliberations and for reaching consensus, which mostly disadvantages diplomats from developing countries and prevents them from fully participating and ensuring that their national interests are accommodated.

**Recommendation 8.2: Diplomats identified for assignment to these multilateral organizations should undertake a compulsory specialization module on multilateral diplomacy. Such a module will assist them to understand how IGOs are structured and mandated, and their internal politics, and what South Africa's view and obligation to these organisations are. Furthermore, the content of the module must present tactics that South African diplomats assigned to institutions of multilateral diplomacy must use to influence decisions in favour of the country's foreign policy.**

**Issue 8.3:** As highlighted in this study, globalisation has had a major impact on all countries of the world. There is currently fierce competition for resources between countries, regions and continents. South Africa has not been spared from this competition for resources, whether financial or material, for economic development purposes in its attempt to achieve '*a better life for all its citizens*'. Behind the strategy of 'a better life for all' is the need for economic development through trade and investment. Even though the primary responsibility for the promotion of trade and investment lies with the DTI, it forms the basis of South Africa's foreign policy. The DTI has representation in a number of strategic missions but even where it is represented its capacity is very limited. The DFA has sufficient resources at all the missions and any political work is mainly for the economic outcomes.

**Recommendation 8.3:** It is recommended that a module on South African economic development strategy through FDI and trade should be included in the FSI training programme. The module on South Africa's economic development strategy through trade and investment must be only offered to diplomats identified for posting to strategic missions where this aspect forms the basis of South Africa's foreign policy.

**Issue 8.4:** Economic development policies globally are being pursued through regional blocks such as the AU, EU, ASEAN, MERCOSUR and the Arab League, to mention a few. The challenge is for countries to create diplomatic capacity that can operate in such an environment and ensure the successful realization of their foreign policy objectives. There is a lot of political and economic dynamics in these engagements and it is critical that individuals identified for assignment to these bodies are offered the relevant skills to effectively and efficiently execute their foreign policy objectives.

**Recommendation 8.4:** A Specialization module on the role of regional economic bodies and their impact on South Africa's foreign policy should be included in the FSI training programme. The skills to be provided through this module critical for the successful implementation of South Africa foreign policy must be offered at the FSI.

**Issue 8.5:** Debates on sustainable development form the basis of fast tracking economic development in multilateral organizations. The challenge for developing countries remains their diplomatic capacity to engage meaningfully in multilateral forums to ensure the balancing of decisions on the need for rapid economic development vis-à-vis environmental conservation in developing economies. Skills development in this area also needs to be prioritised to enhance the ability of South African diplomats to understand the implications of sustainable development in the implementation or facilitation of the implementation of South

Africa's foreign policy.

**Recommendation 8.5:** A specialization module on sustainable development and its impact on the economies of developing countries should be included in the FSI training programme. With such skills, South African diplomats will be able to successfully engage on this issue at multilateral level to ensure that the global agenda on sustainable development does not impact negatively on the need for rapid economic development in the country and the rest of the continent.

#### **6.4.9 Implementation of Findings and Recommendations**

**Issue 9.1:** This study suggests that the remodelling of the FSI training programme must be prioritized to enable the institution to create multi-skilled diplomats who will be able to effectively and efficiently implement or facilitate the implementation of South African foreign policy. The current process undertaken by the DFA to review the FSI is overdue and needs to be undertaken with the urgency it deserves to create a pool of multi-skilled diplomats. The successful implementation of the above recommendations will be only realized if the FSI is encouraged to build on the findings and recommendations of this study.

**Recommendation 9.1:** The FSI must establish an empowered task force to assist with the remodelling of an improved FSI training programme. The task force must be given the mandate to develop a set of guidelines for diplomatic training which takes into consideration the required core competencies and academic credits that will make an official eligible to attend the training programme. The task force must also explore and develop skills requirements for South African diplomats and provide set of guidelines or training objectives that will be used by FSI as a standard to measure the effectiveness of its improved training programme.

## 6.5 SUMMARY

Chapter Six provides a summary of all the chapters including the methodology, literature review, case studies, findings, conclusions and highlight important issues that needs attention in the development of diplomatic capacity and also makes various recommendations. The focus in this chapter is to further explore appropriate training programmes for the multi-skilling of South African diplomats with the relevant diplomatic skills to enable them to effectively implement or facilitate the implementation of its foreign policy. The chapter focuses on pointing out the shortcomings of the current FSI training programme and make recommendations for the development of intervention strategies to enhance it. The need for relevant diplomatic training is very urgent and critical in order to build a diplomatic capacity that will enable South Africa to fulfil its international obligations for the benefit of its people, the peoples of Africa and the world. Issues that are highlighted as challenges for the training of diplomats are findings from the literature review and the primary data from the questionnaires. Recommendations are drawn from the literature review, primary data and case studies of the diplomatic training programmes of FSI, MADS and CFSI. Future areas of research that may need attention in relation to this study is to investigate the contribution that Schools of Public Administration and Management at institutions of higher learning can make to support FSI training programme by offering a public administration programme that include courses/modules as electives on diplomacy to public administration students who are interested in becoming career diplomats.