

## IBSA continues to play moral, leadership role globally: SA minister



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By Fakir Hassen

Johannesburg, Oct 17 (PTI) The IBSA Dialogue Forum continues to play a moral and leadership role globally and offers the space for South-South cooperation, a senior South African Minister has said during the opening of the eighth IBSA Trilateral Ministerial Commission in Durban.

Minister for International Relation and Cooperation Nkoana-Mashabane said the IBSA (India, Brazil, South Africa) provided a platform for its members to cooperate on matters of common interest in respect of global governance issues, notably in the political, socio-economic and security domain.

"In order to continue to be relevant in today's dynamic and changing political and economic environment, we will need to leverage our strengths and unique identity as a grouping of the Global-South with which we bring together three large pluralistic, multi-cultural and multi-ethnic societies from three continents," the minister said.

"As we move through the proceedings, we will highlight the moral and leadership role that IBSA continues to play in the global arena and in the sphere of global governance," she said.

The minister said, "We should do more to ensure that this moral leadership is brought to bear in a more focused way on global issues, including the need for reform of the UN as well as on the appropriate responses to terrorism."

Nkoana-Mashabane called for the rejection of protectionism and renewed commitment by members to the promotion of global trade and investment through an equitable, inclusive, innovative, invigorated and interconnected world economy.

"We should therefore seek to leverage our joint membership in all multilateral platforms to strengthen and consolidate our positions," she said.

The meeting was also attended by Union Minister of State for External Affairs VK Singh. He reviewed the work of the IBSA Trust Fund aimed at addressing the common developmental challenges of countries in the South in various sectors such as agriculture, health and skills development.

"In a modest way, we have been able to assist the poorest of the poor," he said.

Meanwhile, Nkoana-Mashabane lauded the launch of the Indian Ocean Research Expedition Programme, an initiative to exploit the riches of the oceans for the benefit of IBSA members and their neighbouring states.

The programme was launched aboard the SA Agulhas as part of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) Councilmeeting.

Hailing the launch as "a giant step", Nkoana-Mashabane said the expedition would create opportunities for youth in South Africa and its partner states in IORA.

She said the researchers would now be able to establish the extent of the wealth is in the sea that has been lying unexploited for many years.

The 21 members of IORA will collaborate on ideas of how their economies can be boosted by generating income form such discoveries. PTI FH AJR

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