

Even Cuba is benefiting while South Africans suffer

By **Willem Faber MP** - DA Member of the Portfolio Committee on International Relations and Cooperation

Honorable Chairperson and Members,

The Vision and Mission of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation's (DIRCO) in short is to champion an African continent, which is prosperous, peaceful, democratic and by this to manage South Africa's national interest.

Well, now let us look at how we are doing so far under the ANC government during the past few years.

President Thabo Mbeki's African Renaissance Fund was a call for economical regeneration of the African Continent by providing humanitarian assistance to struggling countries.

This African Renaissance Fund now became an open wallet for DIRCO, paid for by you the South African Taxpayer.

A few years ago an internal audit found R530 million had been irregularly spent.

Nepad (New Partnership for Africa's Development) provided information showing that more than R770 million of South African state funds had been used to prop up rogue states and countries that had a history of human rights abuse or non-democratically elected governments, while Zimbabwe received R600 million from the ARF fund even though the committee at that time had heard that SA did not track how the fund was spend.

Now, for those of you who don't know - Cuba is also a part of the African Continent. Yes you heard me correctly. It is the only country outside Africa who also benefits from the ARF.

Our Minister of Finance Tito Mboweni made it clear in his budget speech this year that "We owe a lot of people a lot of money" that we don't have.

During this time when South Africa is borrowing money from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank to respond to the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic, it at the same time makes generous donations of "medical material supplies" worth tens of millions of Rands to the Cuban government.

The African Renaissance Fund recently made available a loan package to Cuba of \$140 million dollars, that is just over two Billion Rand.

The history with Cuba comes a long way since as in 2010 a debt of 1,1 Billion Rand owed by Cuba to South Africa for Diesel engines bought - was scraped /canceled. The ANC government also brought in doctors and engineers from Cuba while we have enough health workers and qualified engineers ourselves, unemployed and sitting at home. Is this ANC government looking at the interest of our People first? Obviously not!

I believe that the ARF fund should be put direct under treasury to stop abusing taxpayers' money and for now rather look at South Africans' health first by providing enough Covid-19 vaccine to our citizens.

In conclusion, the chaos in the ANC is effecting our Country to the point of no return. The Secretary General of the ANC, Ace Magashule, has put South Africa in an international predicament by maintaining that he suspended the President of South Africa and it now becomes clearer every day that the ANC government should use their own "step aside clause" and step aside to let the DA govern well.