Joint Press Statement by EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Catherine Ashton and South African Minister of International relations and Cooperation, Maite Nkoana Mashabane on the occasion of their Ministerial Political Dialogue

The High Representative Catherine Ashton and South African Foreign Minister Maite Nkoana Mashabane met in Brussels on 10 June 2013 for the annual Ministerial Political Dialogue.

They welcomed the continued deepening of the EU-South Africa Strategic Partnership. In particular, they noted a number of important steps forward with the launching of the EU-South Africa Dialogue Forum on Human Rights in Pretoria on 27 May 2013 and the establishment of a sub-committee within the Peace and Security Dialogue on Maritime Security in the Indian and Atlantic Oceans. They also noted the value of on-going Development Cooperation. Despite South Africa's middle income status, the support it provided to social inclusion, skills, education, innovation and capacity development continued to make a significant contribution to alleviating the conditions of inequality, unemployment and poverty that persisted. They encouraged all those engaged in other areas of cooperation, including migration, energy, employment and trade, to press forward with their existing work programmes to deliver progress, including in advance of the forthcoming EU-South Africa Summit in Gauteng on 18 July 2013. It was proposed that the Summit focus on the theme of job creation, economic growth, investment and skills.

They also discussed closer EU-South Africa cooperation on African and international issues. They recognised the two parties' common interests in building peace, security and good governance in areas where it was lacking. They agreed to continue working closely together to enable peaceful, transparent and credible elections in Zimbabwe, Madagascar and Mali, and to help build security and inclusive political processes in the DRC, CAR, Guinea Bissau and Somalia.
They expressed their concern about the continuing conflict in Syria and the deteriorating humanitarian and human rights situation there. They agreed on the urgent need for a political solution to the conflict and confirmed that they will spare no effort in helping create appropriate conditions for a successful convening of the peace conference on Syria.

Both sides welcomed the growing role of emerging economies in global affairs. They congratulated South Africa on the successful BRICS Summit hosted in Durban on 26-27 March 2013 and the developing dialogue between these countries and Africa.

Both parties expressed their concern about the admittance to hospital of the former South Africa President, Nelson Mandela. Their thoughts are with him.