

## African Union to attend SA's BRICS summit

South Africa, in line with promoting regional integration, has for the first time, invited the African regional economies as well as the African Union to the fifth BRICS Summit.

The summit of the Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa group of countries will take place in Durban, in March.

Briefing reports in Pretoria on Thursday, International Relations and Cooperation Deputy Minister Ebrahim Ebrahim said preparations for the summit were in full swing.

The summit will include a first dialogue between BRICS Leaders and African Heads of State and Government from the eight Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and the NEPAD Presidential Infrastructure Champion Initiative (PICIs).

There will also be a dialogue with the Chairperson of the AU Commission Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma to discuss the issue of infrastructure funding in which the AU has tasked President Jacob Zuma to play a leading role.

Ebrahim said this will strengthen the structures that facilitate the intra-BRICS collaboration between captains of industry and academics.

The deputy minister also announced that South Africa has commenced with its three year term on the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

Guided by the recently adopted National Development Plan: vision 2030 and other government policies, the department is coordinating consultations to define the country's position.

"During our tenure, we will participate in the meetings of the ECOSOC subsidiary bodies, consultations with international development partners and ministerial meetings where pertinent issues related to the advancement of the socio-economic development agenda will be discussed."