

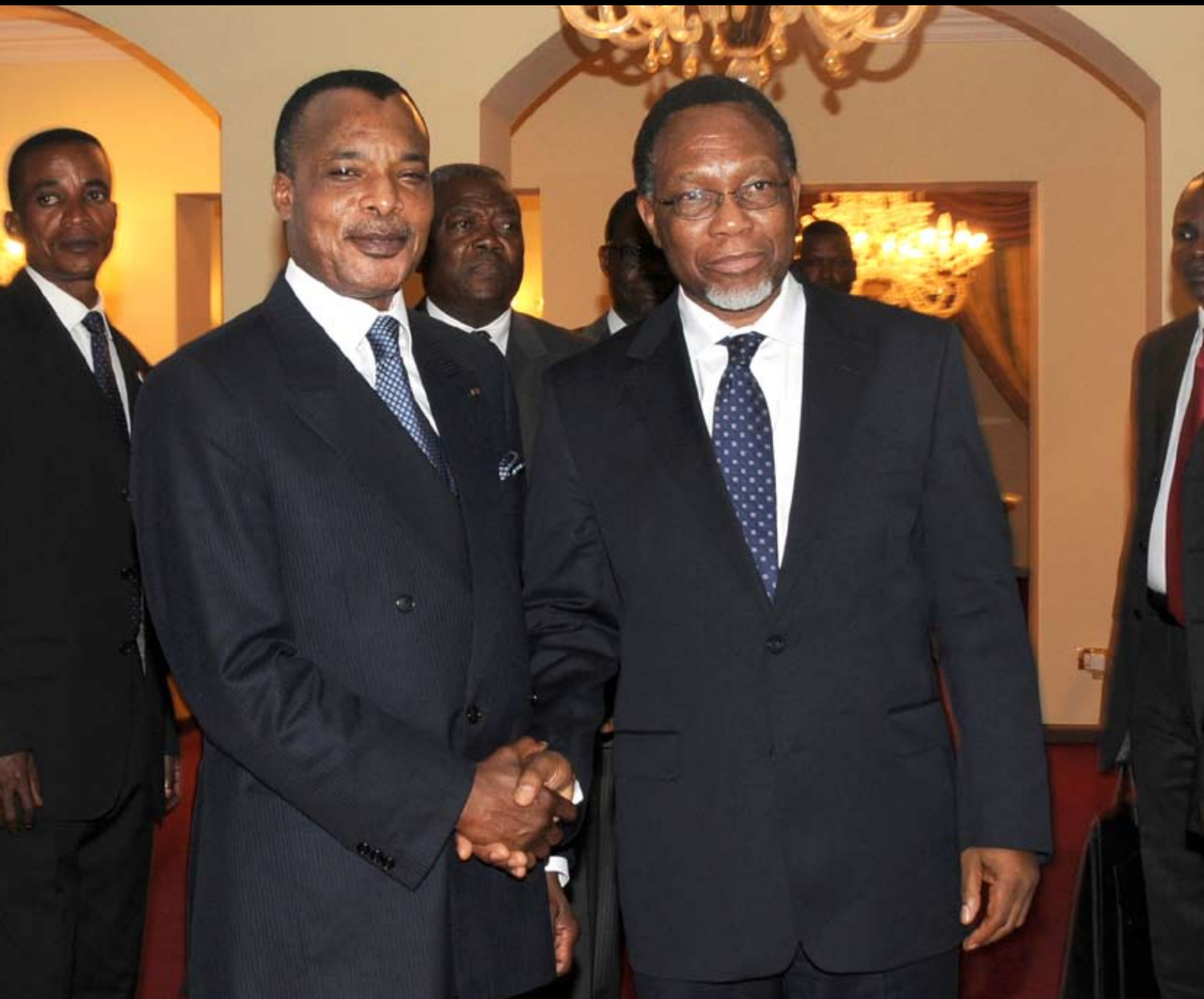


February 2009

dfa **INow**

Your voice to be heard

VISIT BY PRESIDENT KGALEMA MOTLANTE TO THE REPUBLIC OF CONGO



Dear Colleagues

Welcome to the February Edition of the *dfa Now*. In this edition we report on Minister Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma's visit to Argentina for the Bi-national Commission as well as the dinner hosted by the Minister of Minerals and Energy, Buyelwa Sonjica, in Vienna, in honour of Ambassador AS Minty, South Africa's candidate for the position of Director-General of the IAEA.

Our mission in Brazzaville reports back on their achievements of the past year, and we do hope that other missions will also keep us posted with all the happenings in their countries of accreditation.

On the cultural side we have a contribution in the form of a poem for the 16 Days of Activism against Women and Child Abuse and a tribute to the late Mama Afrika, Miriam Makeba.

Our Language Unit advertises their expertise and we wrap up with the media briefing by Director-General, Dr Ayanda Ntsaluba.

Happy Reading! ■

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Creative Corner

Ke Reta Wena Masechaba! (A tribute to all Women)

The pain I feel, the pain she felt, the pain endured,
Africa is dripping her blood, it is genocide,
Her pain, her humiliation just never ends,
How long must I suffer in shame?
How long must I suffer in silence?
How long must she endure degradation?
How long must she endure social injustice?

I gave birth to you Africa, yet I must justify my worth,
I carry the strength of the nation, yet I'm treated unequal,
I chose to birth you and not abort you,
I nurtured you with love, yet you spit on my face,
Who are you to tell me how to live?
Who are you to tell her what is right?

She gave you a right to existence ...you savage beast,
Savage Beast let go of me... for I am born free,
Mightily I stand ... I shall not be afraid,
My body you have turned into torso but not my spirit,
I am a warrior and victory I decree,
Never again will I live in your mercy,
The revelation of the genesis untold is unfolding,

Ke tšhukutšhwane mamokgala basadi,
Rothodi tša meokgo, masetlapelo sechabeng,
Ke meokgo ya bana, selo le ditsikitlano tša meno,
Sechaba homotšegang, ke phumula meokgo mahlong,
Ke swere lerumo la bagale, ntwā e fentšwe,
Mekgolokwane Basadi,

Ke tšhika, leswika la thaba ya phatametsane,
Thaba bohla, thaba ya Badimo,
Basadi tekgantšheng, Seriti sa rena ke seetša,
Mekgolokwane Basadi....Ke tšhaba Baditi!

Sindile Mologadi Mazibuko – 2008



Minister Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma with her Argentine counterpart Dr Jorge Taiana at the signing ceremony during the last day of the Bi-national Commission meeting, Buenos Aires

MINISTER DR NKOSAZANA DLAMINI ZUMA'S VISIT TO ARGENTINA

Minister Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma visited Argentina to hold meetings with the Argentine Foreign Minister, Dr Jorge Taiana, within the context of an existing Bi-national Commission between the two countries, which was established in accordance with a Bilateral Agreement signed between South Africa and Argentina in New York in September 2005. The Minister's delegation consisted of South African Government departments such as Foreign Affairs, Trade and Industry, Environmental Affairs and Tourism, Agriculture, Minerals and Energy, and Science and Technology. The Nuclear Energy Corporation of South Africa (Necsa) also participated in the meetings

Minister Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma's visit to Argentina served as a follow-up to Minister Taiana's visit to South Africa in February 2007 during the launch of a First Meeting of the Bi-national Commission between South Africa and Argentina. The Bi-national Commission covers various themes

that the two countries have identified as strategic areas that will contribute to the wellbeing of the two peoples. Among the identified areas are: transport and infrastructure co-operation, humanitarian sector, minerals and energy co-operation, defence co-operation, environment and tourism, arts and culture, science and technology, trade and investments, as well as sports and education. During their meetings in Buenos Aires, the Ministers reviewed the progress made, since last year, in the abovementioned areas. It was realised that significant work has taken place since February 2007 and that there was an urgent need to consolidate the advances made in the selected areas with a view to ensure that the bilateral relationship between the two countries becomes a strategic complementary engagement rather than that which reflects competition. The two Ministers signed Outcome Minutes of the Bi-national Commission and also signed an Agreement on Co-operation in the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear En-

ergy. An institutional agreement on the co-operation of the two countries' national park institutions was also signed by the Ambassadors of both countries on behalf of the line institutions.

While in Buenos Aires, the Minister had an opportunity to meet and interact with relevant sectors of the Argentine society. As part of these sessions the Minister addressed the Public Policy Association Conference on the Control of International Arms Transfers, which was organised by the Argentine Centre for International Relations (CARI) as well as the Argentine business community at a dinner hosted at the Standard Bank building. Highlighting the importance of Standard Bank's investment in Argentina, the Minister indicated that this investment is proof that countries of the South can invest among themselves in a sustainable manner rather than to always wait for the countries of the North to provide foreign direct in-

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vestments. At the same event, the Minister noted that, though South Africa has been active in the area of investments to Argentina, there was a need to encourage more trade between the two countries. Elaborating on the complementary relationship that the two countries should adopt, the Minister said "We are countries with roughly the same size population and we are countries with similarly sized economies at more or less the same level of development. We are closer to one another in geographical distance than we are to our traditional Northern Hemisphere economic interlocutors. Argentina supplies goods and services that we need and South Africa supplies goods and services that you need. We have made significant progress, but we have only begun to realise our potential".

The Minister also met with the Argentine African Diaspora community to look at their programme of action and how that could be taken forward so as to contribute to the African Union objectives. She further met with some of

the South African and Argentine academics that held a seminar in Buenos Aires in May 2008 to look at ways to enhance the South Africa-Argentina bilateral relationship into what they termed "progressive internationalism", which is characterised by "strategic co-operation through higher diplomatic convergence".

The Minister, while in Buenos Aires, received a significant level of media coverage as she conducted interviews with the popular local newspapers Clarin, Perfil, Buenos Aires Herald, and Ambito Financiero. This provided the Minister the opportunity to update the Argentine public about political and socio-economic developments in South Africa and the African Continent. Alluding to the current international financial/economic crisis and its impact on South Africa and Africa the Minister outlined the fact that this problem has developed from the North and that countries of the South are already feeling the impact. The Minister made reference to the question of the

weakening prices of such commodities as gold, platinum and others, which are affected by the down-turn in their demand from the traditional markets.

The Mission in Buenos Aires views the Minister's visit to Argentina as being successful as it provided more impetus to the vibrant relationship (both at bilateral and multilateral levels) that South Africa enjoys with Argentina. It is further noted that while there is need for some sectors of the Bi-national Commission to do more in order to realise more outcomes, other sectors such as science and technology have recorded high levels of success due to the amount of effort that this working group puts into its programme of action. South Africa is expected to host the 3rd session of the Bi-national Commission during the second half of 2009, where the two countries will review progress made during the period leading to the planned meeting.

Contributed by the South African Embassy in Buenos Aires

TRIBUTE TO MAMA AFRIKA – REFLECTIONS FROM BRAZZAVILLE



Miriam Makeba with Amb Makanda during a visit to Brazzaville

In the cosmic context man's sojourn on this earth is but a flitting moment like the twinkling of an eye. Those who have lived a full life during that brief passage leave their footprints on the sands of time. So it is with our song minstrel – Miriam Zenzile Makeba.

We in Brazzaville are fortunate to have shared her last moments on this journey when she was an honoured guest of President Denis Sassou Nguesso and the government of Congo-Brazzaville during the biennial Pan-African Music Festival (FESPAM)

celebrations, which took place in July 2007 in Brazzaville. She had gracefully accepted the Culture Ministry's invitation to attend a music award ceremony in Brazzaville in which she was to be honoured with an award by FESPAM in November 2008. Alas! It was not to be!

Miriam was an international music icon, the pride of Africa and the Diaspora, an inspiration to generations of young people of all races and cultures. It is fitting that she exited this world on a foreign Italian stage just as the curtain closed after what proved to be her last performance. She lived as she departed, with song.

When the lives of greats are chronicled for posterity, Miriam deserves to be immortalised and celebrated by succeeding generations. Her legacy is an invaluable thread in the cultural tapestry of South Africa, the continent and the Diaspora. Her memory lives on; the cadence of her music lingers on.

Tribute by Welsh G Makanda – Ambassador, Brazzaville, Republic of Congo

UPDATE FROM OUR MISSION IN BRAZZAVILLE, REPUBLIC OF CONGO



President Kgalema Motlante with his Congolese counterpart HE Dennis Sassou Nguesso during his Official visit to Congo

This month the dfa Now brings you a view on our Mission in Brazzaville, Republic of the Congo, as part of the feature to share with you what our colleagues abroad do at the Missions they work at.

The South African Embassy in Brazzaville experienced a very exciting

Former First Lady Zanele Mbeki (far right) with President Dennis Sassou Nguesso and Mrs Nguesso

and busy 2008 under the great leadership and guidance of His Excellency Ambassador Makanda. The Embassy welcomed a new official Stella Sigcau; it witnessed a historical First Ladies conference, which was attended by the former First Lady of South Africa, Mrs Zanele Mbeki; and it saw a major breakthrough, by the signing of a Co-operation Agreement between the na-

tional oil company SNPC and PetroSA in terms of which they will participate in oil and gas exploration and production joint ventures on and off-shore in Congo and the rest of Africa. To date, an initial four blocks off and on-shore have been identified and preparations are afoot to operationalise the agreement.

The Ambassador instructed that at least 70% (70% rule) of the business plan must be implemented by end of the financial year and the officials got down to business to ensure that the target is met. The Embassy welcomed the new financial year by hosting a beautiful national day reception which was attended by ambassadors, ministers, members of the diplomatic corps, and others. The Soweto String Quartet kept everybody on the dance floor with their beautiful melodies. "Bravo" to the officials of the Embassy who spent sleepless nights trying to make sure that everything was in order, which resulted in a well-organised event. The Embassy's impressive new newslet-

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ter was circulated at the event, and is used as a powerful tool to market SA.

The Embassy, in partnership with the Republic of the Congo (RoC) Ministry of Youth, commemorated Youth Day (16 June) by hosting a historical (first of its kind) Youth Leadership Conference in Brazzaville; the Embassy and the Ministry shared the costs of the Conference. South African presenters included Ms Fazilla Haniff, President of IESA; Mr Nkosinathi Biko, CEO: Steve Biko Foundation; Ms Josina Machel from IDASA; and Prince Cedza Dlamini, CEO of Ubuntu Institute. They spoke on various important issues such as HIV/Aids, Human Rights and Education. Presentations were also done by UNDP, UNICEF, WHO, representatives from the RoC Government and civil society. Discussions included the possible formation of the RoC-RSA Youth Leadership Forum/Dialogue.

The aim of the forum is to create a platform where youth leaders of South Africa and RoC, institutions and departments that deal with youth development, can share, exchange and formulate ideas on the African Agenda. It is important to note that the African Union (AU) has developed a policy framework in the form of the African Youth Charter, which prescribes responsibilities to member states for the development of youth. The AU has also declared 16 June as Youth Day and the month of June as Youth Month. A platform like this therefore contributes to the great strides that have already been taken in breaking down the barriers to achieve the AU/NEPAD objectives. Ambassador Makanda and RoC Ministers of Sports and Youth signed the resolutions, which led to the event receiving good media coverage as history was made. The launch of SA-RoC Youth Leadership Forum is scheduled to take place next June.

The Independent Development Trust (IDT) sponsored a workshop on the Joint Initiative on Priority Skills Acquisition (JIPSA); and the office of the former deputy President presented on the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South African (ASGISA); there was also a presentation by the National



The Mission in Brazzaville had a busy year, they co-hosted a Youth Leadership Conference (above) and was involved in charity work with Ambassador Makanda handing over donations to an Orphanage (right)



Youth Commission. The whole exercise was for South Africa and RoC to share and exchange various issues of common interest as well as collaborating on future projects. This was to follow up from the resolutions taken during the Leadership Conference as well as recommendations from the previous SOM. This led to a meeting in Brazzaville between Ms Nkondlo, Chairperson of National Youth Commission, Embassy representatives and Director-General Oboussiki of the Youth Ministry meeting to discuss further developments. An MoU (Memorandum of Understanding) was drafted on Youth which is expected to be signed during the upcoming JCC in Pretoria as well as an agreement on areas of co-operation. The Youth Commission extended an invitation to the Ministry of Youth to attend their Youth event in December. NYC has also committed itself in assisting the Congolese with establishing their own Youth Commission. Further, as fruits of the visit, IDT has committed itself in assisting the Congolese in establishing their own JIPSA programme.

Negotiations took place with IDT-JIPSA to sponsor South African students to do their internship in the RoC. The Embassy met with MTN for marketing and public relations internship; and The Marina and The Olympic Hotels for hospitality training. JIPSA will pay for flights, visas, stipends/allowances, insurance, etc. The first group is expected to arrive in November.

The 6th World Forum on Sustainable Development was held in Brazzaville on 27- 30 October. The Embassy was represented and a report has been drafted and forwarded to Head Office. The discussions focused on these five key areas.

- Funding flows: what are the possible sources of funding for basic infrastructures of sustainable development?
- Economic development of natural assets (case study: Congo water basin and forest basin)
- Uneven dissemination of science and technology, educational,

- health and training problems.
- Agriculture and agro-industry, trade policies and government aid
 - Demographic, social, health, urban and interregional governance

The Embassy also hosted a very successful Senior Officials meeting. The new President of the Republic of South Africa, His Excellency Kgalema Motlanthe, paid a courtesy working visit to His Excellency President Denis Sassou Nguesso in Brazzaville on 31 October 2008. The purpose of the visit was to consolidate the friendly relations that exist between the two countries and re-confirm the agreements and programmes entered into by the two states to date. The visit was characterised by a warm reception by the host president; while his government and community were expressed in colourful pageantry and ceremonial pomp at the airport and en route to the guest house.

The two presidents, accompanied by their respective support teams, including the South African Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Director-General of the South African Presidency, held discussions which covered a wide range of matters of note and mutual interest bilaterally and multilaterally on the African continent and globally. The South African Presidential delegation was feted at a sumptuous state banquet attended by Government dignitaries, heads of the diplomatic corps and representatives of international organisations. The visit, it is hoped, will lend impetus to the momentum of the strengthening of bilateral interactions and co-operation in all social, cultural, economic and political spheres in pursuit of the grand objective of African unity and economic development on the continent.

The Embassy is also working on an agricultural project at the request of the RoC Government to bring South African farmers to invest in the agricultural sector in the RoC as well as impart skill and empower the local farmers. A successful Education Expo was hosted by the Embassy where various Universities provided marketing material and books on study opportunities in

South Africa; the International Education Association of South Africa (IEA-SA) also sponsored books on studying in South Africa; and Ms Josina Machel brought material from IDASA (Institute for Democracy in South Africa).

The Embassy has continued to follow up on political developments as well as on issues around peace and security and quality reports have been forwarded to the Business Unit in this regard. It continues to strengthen relations between the countries of the South (South-South Co-operation) as well engaging western countries so

that their actions further consolidate the African Agenda.

What a year indeed! Still to do amongst others the MTN-SA Embassy Heritage event; SA-MTN wine promotion; 2010 promotion launch with MTN; Business Conference; Seminar on Post Conflict Reconstruction, Arts and Culture; and ASGISA II Workshops. So much to do so little time as the end of the financial year is around the corner. The Embassy also looks forward to the arrival of the new member of the family, Mr Mahomed.

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REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



MEDIA BRIEFING BY DIRECTOR-GENERAL DR AYANDA NTSALUBA

SOUTH AFRICA- EUROPEAN UNION MINISTERIAL TROIKA MEETING

South Africa will host a meeting of the South Africa-European Union Strategic Partnership. This is a meeting that will be at Ministerial level in Kleinmond, Western Cape. The South African delegation will be led by the Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma. Also participating will be the Ministers of Trade and Industry and Environmental Affairs and Tourism as well as the new Deputy Minister of Finance.

On the European Union (EU) side, it will be the Foreign Minister of the Czech Republic; the Czech Republic currently occupies the Presidency of the EU and Louis Michel. Louis Michel will also have some other meetings including paying a courtesy call on the President of the Republic during his stay.

Essentially, the meeting will be preceded by a senior officials meeting

on 15 January 2009 and the main areas that we will try to work through will be a reflection on the TDCA and the implementation of the new chapters. Secondly, as we deal with this, the difficult issue of the economic partnership agreements must be dealt with. This would also explain the interest of the Minister of Trade and Industry.

The EU Czech Presidency also pays attention to issues of climate and energy security. I think they want to make this one of the key issues of their Presidency and off course, we have an ongoing dialogue with them on these issues so again, we will focus a bit on this.

There will also be a lot of political discussions – as you know, in our discussions with the EU we put a lot of emphasis on encouraging the EU to support the institutions on the continent especially around the area of support of the peace architecture of the continent and as you know, the EU

is the biggest contributor to the African Union Peace Facility. So, needless to say, the EU will have an interest in probing some of our views on some of the burning conflict hot spots in Africa and unavoidably, the two most important ones that will have to be discussed include Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo particularly the eastern part and Zimbabwe. So, clearly these will be on the agenda.

This is the first meeting to which I would like to refer.

INCOMING VISIT BY CHINESE FOREIGN MINISTER

The next meeting to which I would like to refer, which would essentially be back-to-back with the SA-EU meeting, that will also take place in Kleinmond is a meeting between the Minister of Foreign Affairs and a delegation from South Africa and the Foreign Minister of the People's Republic of China Yang Jiechi.

The areas on which we will focus include: to review major activities that took place in 2008 relating to the celebration of the 10th anniversary of diplomatic relations between South Africa and the People's Republic of China and look at whether these unfolded in a manner that we would have wanted and the lessons we can learn.

Secondly, we would be discussing with China the second arm of our engagement which is what we call the Partnership for Growth and Development and this, just to remind you, is an initiative that was borne out of an agreement between former President Mbeki and President Hu Jintao – an attempt to see how we can balance the trade between South Africa and China. This primary focus is to look at those sectors in which South Africa may have a competitive advantage so that we can boost our export particularly of manufactured goods into the Chinese market. This was related particularly to our realisation that a lot of our exports were of primary commodities and secondly that trade is very



PRESIDENT MOTLANTHE TO VISIT MALI

There will be a visit of the President of the Republic to Mali on 24 January 2009. You are all aware of the Timbuktu project in Mali as we have previously spoken about it. There has been some significant progress and we are at the point where the facility can be opened. Therefore, a South African team led by the President and supported strongly by the Department of Arts and Culture will be visiting Mali for this purpose.

Riasen Naidoo – Timbuktu Manuscripts Project: I thought I could give you some background on the project – as you may be aware, this project was initiated in 2001 when former President Mbeki visited Mali on an official visit and he was taken to Timbuktu to see the collection of manuscripts. It was on seeing the condition of the manuscripts that the need to preserve these manuscripts, the need to train Malians arose and in 2002 a bilateral agreement was signed between Mali and South Africa that looked at three areas of co-operation – the training of Malians in conservation and restoration, the creation of a greater awareness of the manuscripts and the contents of these manuscripts, and to provide adequate housing for these manuscripts.

What followed was that a non-profit trust was created and board members were asked to join; the trust was tasked with raising money for the project, especially for the construction of a new building. The Department of Arts and Culture has between 2003 and 2005 trained five Malians selected by the Malian government. Our conservators worked with the same group of Malians in Timbuktu. The estimated cost of the new building is between R50-60 million and the Timbuktu Manuscripts Trust was chaired by Dr Essop Pahad and along with himself and other board members R45 million has been independently raised. We are happy to report that the building is close to completion, the inauguration will be

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Minister Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma with her counterpart from the People's Republic of China Mr Yang Jiechi during a bilateral Strategic Dialogue Meeting

skewed because China exports lots of finished goods into our market. It is also an attempt to identify strategic or key sectors that will be attractive to the Chinese for purposes of foreign direct investment into our economy.

We will also discuss with the Chinese what we should be jointly doing over the next six to seven months to ensure that the next meeting of the Forum on China-Africa Co-operation (FOCAC) that will be held in Egypt, will be successful.

Finally, of course, China and South Africa participate in a number of multilateral fora. There is the topical issue of the UN reform that will now prob-

ably move to higher gear with the commencement of intergovernmental negotiations that will commence in February and needless to say, we would want to exchange some ideas with the Chinese on how they are approaching this issue.

There are other issues that are going to be topical this year – the WTO negotiations are continuing, the current global financial crisis and the Summit that will be hosted by Prime Minister Brown on 2 April 2009 and the Chinese are an active player on the continent. I don't think the areas of focus around the African agenda will be fundamentally different to those I have already referred to.

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presided over by the Presidents of the two countries on 24 January 2009. An invitation has also been extended to former President Thabo Mbeki.

The new building will have administrative offices for the staff of the Institute; an archive that will accommodate the 30 000 manuscripts in its collection – the oldest of which dates back to 1204 covering a range of subjects to astronomy, literature, philosophy, traditional medicine; there will be a conservative laboratory; a state of the art auditorium that will accommodate 100 people to be used for conferences and with a view to promoting Timbuktu as a tourism destination; there will be an outdoor amphitheatre; and a public library for the citizens of Timbuktu.

It has not been an easy road to get this building completed in time – Timbuktu is about 1 000 km from Bamako, the last 200 of which is desert so the transportation of materials has been very difficult and temperatures reach 52°C in the summer.

SWITZERLAND HAS JOINED THE SCHENGAN GROUP OF COUNTRIES

I raise this matter particularly due to enquiries we received from South African businesspeople wanting to travel to Davos to attend the World Economic Forum. On 12 January 2009 Switzerland joined the Schengen group of countries and therefore this means that South African citizens need to apply for visas to travel to Switzerland.

ZIMBABWE

I think what we would want to report on Zimbabwe is a follow through on the briefing given to you by President Motlanthe in December which relates to the humanitarian intervention.

Just to recap – you would recall that at that point in time, he had indicated that he had sent a team led by Reverend Chikane, of which I was also part, to Zimbabwe. We were then sent by the President as his envoys to Zambia and to the Democratic Republic of Congo to basically convey some of the thoughts the President had. Following the agree-

ment of other members of the Troika and discussions that took place with other leaders in the region, a decision was taken to establish in Zimbabwe a non-partisan co-ordinating mechanism that essentially includes government, multilateral organisations, civil society particularly the churches, farmers and farming community precisely because the focus was going to be on two areas – food security and how to begin to work on a concerted plan that would assist with the rehabilitation of the agricultural sector in Zimbabwe as well as, of course, to do what is necessary from SADC to help Zimbabwe deal with the cholera outbreak; many SADC countries have donated. On 7 and 8 January, the SADC Executive Secretary, Tomas Salamo, was in Zimbabwe again to meet the various structures of civil society and government and formally establish that structure and ensure that there would be co-ordination of all the assistance that would be provided.

Now, it is still too early to assess what success we will register at that co-ordinating mechanism. But let me add, this co-ordinating mechanism is not meant to replace the work that is being done by the different agencies working in Zimbabwe – government is doing some work, the UN agencies are doing some work, the donor agencies supporting civil society but what became patently clear to us is that because there was no effective organisation, there was sometimes duplication and in a situation that requires so much, as the current situation in Zimbabwe requires, that was clearly not efficient.

I think this is what we are focusing on. South Africa has made her own contribution concentrating particularly on the rehabilitation of the agricultural sector. What has become clear is that the intervention by SADC in Zimbabwe, at the minimum, would have to carry through up to the next planting season which is around November/December 2009. It is quite clear that the yields that we should be expecting from the current planting session are not going to meet the current food requirements of Zimbabwe. So, for all intents and purposes, although we are talking of figures of 5,5 mil-

lion people requiring food aid, that for the 2009 harvesting season which is around April we are not going to make a significant dent in that figure. All of us in the region and the international community should brace ourselves for continued support, but the focus now is whether in fact, over the course of the year, there can be a series of interventions that have been articulated and identified by the stakeholders in Zimbabwe that would then lead eventually to taking the country into its previous situation of food security.

We know no more than you do, with respect to the political side of things; all we know that on Tuesday next week, the Parliament of Zimbabwe is convening. At a theoretical level we should be expecting Amendment 19 to pass through but of course there is the very important meeting of the executive of the MDC on 18 January which would have a significant impact on how the MDC approaches that amendment. Anything we would say apart from this would be speculation, and I do not think we can say much more except to say again that every possible analysis that we make as a South African government clearly shows us that we cannot see any route that has immediate prospects for success that bypasses the stage of some variant of an inclusive government in Zimbabwe so we continue to hold the view that whatever the levels of discomfort amongst the different parties, the leaders will find a way to get around the difficulties they may have.

ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT

Deputy Minister Hajaig has briefed you recently on this matter but the three key issues we would like to appraise you on:

Firstly, there have been consultations between ourselves and some structures of civil society with respect to looking at what humanitarian assistance we can render. You will know that in the past we have worked very closely with the Gift of the Givers Foundation, we have also had discussions with the Council of Churches, the Bishops Conference, Cosatu and there is a

general view amongst all the structures of civil society that South Africa has to intervene and provide some form of humanitarian assistance so we are in the process of working on that and if all goes according to plan, we expect a relief flight to depart from South Africa on 22 January 2009. There are some technical issues that have to be resolved but we are sure we can work around them particularly the access to Gaza which is currently under siege. But we are working on this.

The second area of intervention is to look at what happens with respect to supporting some of the political initiatives that are underway and most important amongst these is really the recent UN resolution calling for a ceasefire but there are two points that I would like to bring to your attention with regard to this. The resolution says that the ceasefire will lead to the full withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza. I want to stress that the resolution as crafted does not call for an immediate withdrawal of Israeli forces and just to indicate, on our side, together with a lot of countries in the region, we would have hoped for an immediate and simultaneous process of withdrawal. However, in the process of negotiations around the resolution, we ended up with the formulation as it currently stands. This is risky because it is open to some form of provocation from one or the other side. But nevertheless, that is where we are.

The other issue I would like to bring to your attention is our support for what is moving on as the French and Egyptian initiatives, whose essence is to create a credible buffer mechanism that would try to respond to the concerns being raised about arms smuggling into Gaza and off course, we do know there is consultation among the countries in the Middle East and on our side I think, to the extent, that these initiative do enjoy quite a lot of support of the countries in the region, I think we support that and would continue to hope for a swift resolution to that problem.

The media briefing has been edited for length and layout purposes.

MINISTER SONJICA HOSTS DINNER IN HONOUR OF AMBASSADOR A.S. MINTY



Minister Buyelwa Sonjica with (from left to right) Ambassador AS Minty (South Africa's Governor on the IAEA Board of Governors), Ambassador Taous Feroukhi (Chairperson of the IAEA Board of Governors, and Ambassador LM Gumbi (SA's Representative in Vienna)

On the margins of the November 2008 Board of Governors session of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the South African Permanent Mission in Vienna received Minister Buyelwa Sonjica, Minister for Minerals and Energy. Minister Sonjica hosted a dinner in honour of South Africa's candidate for the position of Director-General of the IAEA, Ambassador AS Minty, on 27 November 2008 at the Grand Hotel Vienna. The Director-General of the IAEA, Dr Mohamed ElBaradei, Governors on the IAEA Board, as well as senior officials of the Agency attended the dinner.

The dinner followed the official nomination of Ambassador AS Minty for the position of Director-General of the IAEA when the nomination letter from Foreign Minister Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma was presented by Minister Sonjica to Ambassador Taous Feroukhi, Chairperson of the Board of Governors of the IAEA.

At a widely attended media briefing following the presentation of the nomination letter, Minister Sonjica stated that her presence in Vienna demonstrated the commitment of the South African Government to Ambassador Minty's candidature, which has also been endorsed by the recent African Union Summit. She informed the media the nomination represented the first time since South Africa's democratic elections in 1994, that the South African Government has nominated a candidate for the elected position to head an international organisation. She also expressed her belief that Ambassador Minty's lifelong dedication to the elimination of nuclear weapons and the promotion of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, his outstanding diplomatic skills and his ability to reach out between different groups to forge a consensus, would serve the Agency well in the challenges that lie ahead.

Where were you..?

