

**Address by Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Mr Ebrahim I Ebrahim, on the Occasion of the Diplomatic Fair, 14 September 2012.**

Welcome and thank you for accepting our invitation to participate in this breakfast meeting leading to our Diplomatic Fair under the theme “Celebrating Cultural Diplomacy in South Africa”. This event coincides with one of the important months in our calendar, heritage month. Our heritage is our history and our future and as such, we should cherish it!

At the outset, it is important to define Cultural Diplomacy as a domain of diplomacy concerned with establishing, developing and sustaining relations with foreign states by way of culture, art and education. It is also a proactive process of external projection in which a nation’s institutions, value system and unique cultural personality are promoted at a bilateral and multilateral level.

Scholars of cultural diplomacy have demonstrated that in an increasingly globalized, interdependent world, in which the proliferation of mass communication technology ensures we all have greater access to each other than ever before - cultural diplomacy is critical to fostering peace & stability throughout the world.

Cultural diplomacy, when learnt and applied at all levels, possesses the unique ability to influence the Global Public Opinion and ideology of individuals, communities, cultures or nations, which can accelerate the realization of the following five principles:

- Respect and Recognition of Cultural Diversity & Heritage
- Global Intercultural Dialogue
- Justice, Equality & Interdependence
- The Protection of International Human Rights
- Global Peace & Stability

We can confidently assert that indeed cultural diplomacy is an important component of our work as role players in the international arena.

In this exhibition, the diplomatic community will be sharing with members of the public, information about their respective history, cultures, and traditions. Business, education and tourism information will also be shared.

Members of the media will also have the opportunity to visit the different stands and interview the Ambassadors and High Commissioners.

I now take this opportunity to declare the Diplomatic Fair of 2012 officially open, and invite you to visit the international stands, at your leisure.

Thank you.