

What's On



Photos from the event

Photos by Itehab Qurtal

'It's an important occasion to renew our commitment'

South African Embassy celebrates their National Day

By Iddris Seidu
Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 26: The Embassy of the Republic of South Africa celebrated their National Day Monday evening at the Salwa Sabah Hall in Salmiya with the attendance of African, European, Asian and US Ambassadors.

The National Day of South Africa falls on April 27, marking 22 years since the dawn of democracy in the country in 1994. Speaking to the Arab Times at the event, the South African Ambassador to Kuwait, HE Mzolisa Bona said today they are looking back, appreciating the road they have traversed in the last 22 years, deepening democracy and also giving access, opportunities and services to South Africans and also celebrating South Africa's constructive contribution in the global community. "We all have a common agenda to charter a better life for all. On our independence day today, we are saying we have done much but there is still more to do to build South Africa and a better world in cooperation with our international partners including our important partner the State of Kuwait".

The Ambassador who is in his second year in Kuwait, added that the independence is celebrated every year in cooperation with their partner the Kuwaiti government and the Kuwaiti society at large. "It is an important occasion for us to renew our commitment, our vision of a united democratic, non racial and prosperous South Africa that contributes to a better Africa and world at large".

South Africa, officially the Republic of South Africa, is the southernmost sovereign state in Africa. It is bound on the south by 2,798 kms of coastline of Southern Africa stretching along the South Atlantic and Indian Oceans, on the north by the neighbouring countries of Namibia, Botswana and Zimbabwe, and on the east by Mozambique and Swaziland, and surrounding the kingdom of Lesotho. South Africa is the 24th largest country in the world by land area, and with close to 53 million people, is the world's 24th-most populous nation. It is the southernmost country on the mainland of the Old World or the Eastern Hemisphere.

Multicultural

South Africa is a multithnic society encompassing a wide variety of cultures, languages, and religions. Its pluralistic makeup is reflected in the constitution's recognition of 11 official languages, which is among the highest number of any country in

the world. Two of these languages are of European origin: Afrikaans developed from Dutch and serves as the first language of most white and coloured South Africans; English reflects the legacy of British colonialism, and is commonly used in public and commercial life, though it is fourth-ranked as a spoken first language.

The country is one of the few in Africa never to have had a coup d'état, and regular elections have been held for almost a century.

However, the vast majority of black South Africans were not enfranchised until 1994. During the 20th century, the black majority sought to recover its rights from the dominant white minority, with this struggle playing a large role in the country's recent history and politics. The National Party imposed apartheid in 1948, institutionalizing previous racial segregation. After a long and sometimes violent struggle by the African National Congress and other anti-apartheid activists both inside and outside the country, discriminatory laws began to be repealed or abolished from 1990 onwards.

Following is an address by the Ambassador of SA to the State of Kuwait, HE Ambassador MP Bona during the Freedom Day Reception on April 25, 2016, Marina Hotel Your Excellency, Ms Reem Al Khalid, the Assistant Foreign Minister for America Affairs.

HE Abdulkadir Abu Baker The Acting Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, Ambassador of Somalia Your Excellencies and Ambassadors

Members of the Diplomatic Corps Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen Assalamou Alaykum

"It is a pleasure and great honour for me to welcome you on the occasion of the 22nd celebration of our

Event aims to strengthen relations with Kuwait

South Africa Week promotes its culture

KUWAIT CITY, April 26: On April 27, 2016, South Africa will mark 22 years since the dawn of Freedom and Democracy on April 27, 1994. In celebration of this milestone, the South African Embassy is hosting a South Africa Week from April 28-29. The purpose of the South Africa Week is to highlight South Africa's achievements and the road ahead, to strengthen relations and partnerships with Kuwait, present trade and investment opportunities, and to promote the attractive and abundant tourism destinations and experiences in South Africa.

Freedom Day. Thank you for blessing us with your presence on this august occasion.

The April 27, 1994 marked the end of over 300 years of colonialism, segregation and white minority rule in South Africa and ushered the establishment of a new democratic government under the leadership of late president Nelson Mandela.

Furthermore, 2016 is the 40th anniversary of the June 16 Student Uprising that marked a turning point in the struggle for freedom and democracy in South Africa. We are also celebrating the 20th anniversary of the approval of the South African constitution by the Constitutional Court on Dec 4, 1996.

"As we celebrate our 22nd National Day today, we acknowledge the injustices of our past and honour those who suffered for justice and freedom. In this regard, we wish to express our deep gratitude for the unwavering support and solidarity that we received from the international community during our hard and long struggle against colonialism and apartheid.



A photo from the event

The South Africa Week kicked off with the South African National Day celebration on April 25, followed by a food festival, food tasting and food products promotions in partnership with the Western Cape Fine Foods Initiative and major retailers in Kuwait from the April 26-28.

A South African Chef will visit Kuwait to prepare South African cuisines for the food festival and food tasting events. On 26 April, the Embassy will host a food festival at the Al-Farooq Hotel for invited guests from the food and hospitality industry, Kuwait travel trade, and the media.

"Distinguished Guests, our Freedom Day celebration today is an important occasion to reiterate South Africa's commitment to the vision of united, non-racial, democratic, non-sexist and prosperous South Africa that contributes to a Better and Safer Africa and a Better World for ALL.

"We would also like to take this opportunity also congratulate the State of Kuwait, and His Highness the Amir, on the 55th Anniversary of the Independence of Kuwait, 25th Anniversary of the Liberation of Kuwait and the 10th anniversary of assumption of power by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah

Progress

"The celebration of our National Day provides an opportunity to reflect on progress made in moving South Africa forward. Today, South Africa is a better place to live in and we are proud of the progress we have made thus far. Amongst other achievements, in the last 22 years, we have built democratic institutions, transformed the public service, extended basic services to all South Africans, created a well-developed and diversified economy, launched one of the most successful and biggest renewable energy PPPs. In terms of foreign policy South Africa has moved from being a skunk of the world before 1994 to an active and constructive partner in international relations and cooperation.

"However, we still have a long way to go to address stubborn historical challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality. As the late president Mandela has said:

"As long as poverty, injustice and gross inequality persist in our world, none of us can truly rest." The National Development Plan is our detailed blueprint for how the

The Embassy and the Western Cape Fine Foods Initiative will also have food tasting and food products promotion events at Mishref Cooperative on April 27 and the Lulu Hypermarket on April 28 from 18:00 to 23:00. We invite the Kuwait community to visit Mishref Cooperative and Lulu Hypermarket for a taste of South Africa and to see the high quality and affordable South African food products.

The mission looks forward to a successful South Africa week in partnership with all Kuwait partners and stakeholders.

country can eliminate poverty and reduce inequality by the year 2030. This plan is backed by a massive \$1 trillion infrastructure programme and a comprehensive industrialisation and industrial upgrading programme.

"Dear Excellencies and Distinguished Guests, this year we also mark 22 years since the establishment of diplomatic relations between South Africa and the State of Kuwait. We continue to strengthen the bonds of friendship and mutually beneficial cooperation between South Africa and the State of Kuwait in all fields of common interest. More importantly, we reaffirm South Africa's commitment to build strong governmental, institutional, technical and private sector partnerships that will advance the strategic objectives of our two countries National Development Plans.

"Dear Excellencies and Distinguished Guests, in his State of the National Address this year, President Zuma reiterated that Africa remains a Central Pillar of South Africa's Foreign Policy. Working together with other African countries and institutions, South Africa will continue to actively contribute to the advancement of Africa's development objectives within the context of the African Union's New Partnership for Africa's Development and Agenda 2063.

"We commend Kuwait's continued support for multilateralism, humanitarian assistance, international diplomacy and the peaceful resolution of conflicts.

"We dare not fail our global commitment and partnership to implement the Sustainable Development Goals that we agreed to last year, for this is the only path that can bring us closer to the realisation of a Better World for ALL.

"Let us not forget, let us recall the former UN Secretary Kofi Annan's seminal report, In Larger Freedom, wherein he counselled that "there can be no sustainable peace without democracy and development and democracy and development cannot be sustained in the absence of Human Rights."

wagons in Africa, South Africa's development finance institutions are providing finance and technical support for several infrastructure and industrial projects in Africa, the South African private sector is a leading investor in the continent, covering a wide range of sectors such as banking and financial services, energy, infrastructure, logistics, mining, retail, etc.

"It is within this context that we wish to reiterate South Africa's appreciation for the State of Kuwait's commitment to its relations with Africa bilaterally and in the context of the Africa-Arab partnership. We appreciate Kuwait's humanitarian assistance and its substantial support for socio-economic development projects in Africa. Furthermore, the State of Kuwait's honouring of its pledges at the Africa-Arab Summit in 2013 is highly appreciated. We value Kuwait's active engagement as the Chair of the Africa-Arab partnership in preparations for the next Summit to be held in Africa in 2016. We encourage Kuwait institutions and the private sector to partner with Africa to take advantage of the huge trade and investment opportunities in agriculture, infrastructure, mining, manufacturing and the service industry.

"Distinguished Guests, the complex geopolitical and security challenges that we are grappling with today, require a collective commitment to address the root causes of human insecurity in our world. South Africa supports diplomacy and the peaceful resolution of conflicts guided by the rule of international law and multilateralism. South Africa is committed to work with the State of Kuwait and other international partners and institutions in support of the global agenda for sustainable development.

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