

Keynote Address by the Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Mr L. Landers, on the occasion of a Business Breakfast in Madrid, Spain, 10 April 2015.

Programme Director;

Your Excellencies, Ministers and Deputy Ministers;

Esteemed Ambassadors and High Commissioners with us today;

Honourable Members of the Diplomatic Corps;

Captains of Industry from both Spain and South Africa;

Potential Investors;

Distinguished Guests;

Ladies and gentlemen;

I rise to extend my warm greetings and gratitude, on behalf of the people and government of the Republic of South Africa.

During our short stay here in Madrid, my delegation and I came to an amicable settlement that, this country offers a matchless number of attractions.

We could also not ignore the importance of these attractions to the overall commercial opportunities offered by Spain. An opportunity we dare not miss!

We are therefore convinced that we are at the right address in helping us create a better life for those who are less privileged.

Programme Director, Ladies and Gentlemen, and all protocols observed;

It gives me great pleasure to address you on this event that marks the extension of a very strong diplomatic alliance between South Africa and Spain.

What brings us to this beautiful City of Madrid is our quest for the fulfilment of our diplomatic engagements with the people and the government of Spain.

Our visit signals our keenness to contributing positively towards deepening the ties between our two countries, particularly our economic ties.

We meet with you today to share with you the South African story. A story that binds our two nations together. A story of triumph and victory.

Programme Director;

Our visit to Spain coincides with our country's celebration of Freedom Month - April.

For this year, the theme for our freedom month celebrations is aptly titled: "***Celebrating the Beginning of the Third Decade of our Freedom through Accelerating Radical Economic Transformation***".

We invite you – the people and government of Spain - to join us in these celebrations as we turn a new leaf in the democratic life of our country. This is a very significant moment in the economic transformation of our country.

Our two governments must use these celebrations to give impetus to our years of friendship and goodwill since the establishment of diplomatic relations between our two countries.

Your Excellencies,

The theme we chose for our celebrations clearly indicate our deep desire to transform our economy.

It is also a clear commitment by government to ensure that this transformation remains central to our developmental agenda.

But this is a task we cannot achieve on our own.

We are in constant search of solution to challenges that we face in order to achieve the form of transformation we need.

It is often out of such formidable bilateral relations that we can, collectively, navigate solutions to such challenges, and find mutually inclusive and beneficial solutions.

Ladies and gentlemen;

South Africa has come a long way. Today, we boast an economy that has grown by an average rate of 3.2% a year from 1994 to 2013.

Arguably, ours is an economy that is sophisticated, diverse and promising. We are poised to be a truly emerging market globally.

The rise of a black middle class, estimated to have grown from under 1.7 million in 2004 to 4.2 million in 2012 has also contributed significantly to the country's resilient economic growth.

According to World Bank figures, South Africa is ranked 43<sup>rd</sup> out of 183 countries in the world for ease of doing business. Clearly, this should be a preferred destination for all investors with a desire to grow their investments in a stable economic and political environment.

In 2004, the AT Kearney Foreign Direct Confidence Index ranked South Africa in position 13 among 25 leading economies moving up two places from 2013.

Today, we are humbled to be ranked higher than countries such as Switzerland, Sweden and Netherlands.

Friends,

The informed decision by Spain to choose South Africa as one of its priority markets outside the European Union has led to a new stage in Spanish-South African trade relations.

I am pleased to note that the presence of Spanish companies in South Africa is increasing exponentially.

They continue to contribute towards industrial output, employment, professional training and technological development in South Africa in keeping with our government's key priority areas.

Your Excellencies;

In his State of the Nation Address on 12 February 2015, President Jacob Zuma identified several key focus sectors that require expansion and growth.

These have potential for creating large scale employment, and include:

- Energy supply;
- Transport and building infrastructure;
- Water and sanitation;

- The agricultural and agro-processing value chain;
- ICT infrastructure and broadband roll out;
- The mining value chain; and;
- The industrial manufacturing sector.

Clearly, South Africa remains amongst nations that strive to enhance inclusive economic growth that will lead to an increase in the creation of decent, sustainable jobs, advance the fight against poverty and accelerate the economic transformation with our countries.

Today we pledge our commitment to continuously engage the Spanish Captains of Industry, South African investing in Spain and potential investors to forge stronger partnerships for development and progress.

I would like to invite you to visit South Africa, network with our local business people and explore the opportunities we have for you.

I thank you