

**TRANSLATION OF A SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE SPANISH DEPUTY MINISTER
FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS AT THE SOUTH AFRICAN FREEDOM DAY EVENT ON 16
JUNE 2015**

YOUR EXCELLENCY AMBASSADOR LULAMA SMUTS NGONYAMA, SOUTH
AFRICAN AMBASSADOR TO THE KINGDOM OF SPAIN,

AMBASSADORS,

AUTHORITIES,

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

It is a pleasure to be here today, two days after arriving back from Johannesburg, where I participated in the African Union Summit. During my short and intensive trip to South Africa, I was able to witness the strength and vitality of your country.

Unfortunately, I was unable to get away from the Summit meetings to visit some of South Africa's spectacular tourism attractions. I did, however, make a short visit to the Apartheid Museum, an important place to learn about South Africa's recent history, and to take a quick photo in front of the Soccer City Stadium, an important place for Spain for a much more "mundane" reason. It was the place where we won the 2010 World Cup.

On the sidelines of our multilateral meetings, I was able to meet President Jacob Zuma and Minister of International Relations and Cooperation Maite Nkoana Mashabane, the excellent hosts of a Summit that focused on an objective which has become one of the hallmarks of Spain's commitment to Africa: "2015: The Year of Women's Empowerment".

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

Spain has always been present in Africa, as a friend and as a partner in achieving the continent's objectives. I would like to highlight that Spain has an

increasing role to play in a continent in which South Africa is an important actor.

As you know, Ambassador, the relations between Spain and South Africa have grown in intensity of the past few years. Although our countries are situated at opposite extremes of the continent, our efforts to become closer partners have led to constant dialogue and a growth in mutual understanding.

This was evident during the tenth bilateral consultations between Spain and South Africa recently held in Madrid, in which both delegations were able to attest to the excellent state of our bilateral relations.

Both Deputy Minister Landers and I were able to witness firsthand how our bilateral relations have grown in every field. I think that we can be proud of the work done.

The expansion of our economic ties is evidence of the quality of our relations.

In this regard, allow me to highlight that 30% of our exports to Sub-Saharan Africa go to South Africa.

Spain is one of the main investors in South Africa and one of the main job creators in the country, especially in the renewable energy sector, with an investment stock that is worth more than 5,000 million US Dollars.

We estimate that our investment portfolio has created 12,000 direct jobs and 25,000 indirect jobs in the country.

Our economies are complementary, so it is important to continue to invest in transport and water management infrastructure among other sectors.

That is why Spain will be participating in a regional business event that will be held in Johannesburg in July this year.

Meanwhile, as your Excellencies know, Spain is a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council.

We would, therefore, like to make use of this opportunity to intensify the level of dialogue between our countries, taking into consideration that South Africa is a member of the African Union Peace and Security Council as well as the Rotating Chair of the SADC and the Rotating Chair of the G77+China.

Spain and South Africa share a common commitment towards multilateralism and towards the need to respect the international treaties of which we are signatories.

Therefore, as we commemorate the Soweto uprising in 1976 and the struggle against *apartheid*, we call on South Africa to continue to be a leading voice in favour of the respect for Human Rights and democracy within Africa and throughout the world.

Spain has allocated more than 47 million euros to SADC countries since 2007, evidence of our commitment to the region. In this regard, the opportunities for bilateral or trilateral cooperation are endless. We will continue working together, with the same spirit that has brought us this far over the past few years.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

As Nelson Mandela said “we find ourselves at the dawn of the African century, a century in which Africa will occupy its rightful place among the nations of the world”.

With these words, *Madiba* was announcing something that has now become a reality. As each day goes by in this century, Africa: the continent of opportunities is becoming Africa: the continent of success. Africa is no longer the continent of the future. It has become the continent of the present.

Ambassador, please accept my congratulations on your National Day. I hope that this day will be a day in which Spain and South Africa can together celebrate a path of friendship and cooperation between our two peoples that will contribute towards building a better future for Africa and for the whole world.

Thank you very much.