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Deputy Minister Mfeketo hosted Iranian Counterpart

Iranian Deputy Minister for Arab and African Countries, Dr. Jaber Ansari, met with the South African Deputy DIRCO Minister, Ms. Nomaindiya Mfeketo, in Pretoria on 28 September 2016.

During the visit, Deputy Minister Mfeketo expressed hope that President Hassan Rouhani would visit South Africa in the near future.

Dr. Jaber Ansari explained that strengthening and expansion of ties with the Republic of South Africa on all areas is a high priority in the Iranian foreign policy agenda.



Photo by Jacoline Schoonees

South Africa and Iran take steps to intensify cooperation

30 September 2016

The Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Ms Nomaindiya Mfeketo, hosted her Iranian counterpart, Dr Jaber Ansari, the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, in Pretoria on 29 September 2016 for bilateral consultations in accordance with the mandate of the South Africa-Iran Deputy Ministerial Working Group (DMWG), which provides oversight in monitoring and guiding bilateral political and economic relations between the two countries. Dr. Ansari was accompanied by the Acting Deputy Minister of Oil in Iran, Dr Hashemian, as well as senior officials from other departments and representatives from the Iranian private sector.

The DMWG remains an important diplomatic instrument as part of the South Africa - Iran Joint Commission to consolidate and elevate bilateral political, economic and people to people relations between South Africa and Iran

into a substantive strategic partnership that will benefit both countries and its peoples. Towards this end, the DMWG reviewed progress regarding the implementation of mutually agreed upon strategies and bilateral Programs of Action (POA) within targeted sectors of cooperation in among other the fields of trade, banking, energy, agriculture, mining, education, health, tourism, defence, infrastructure development, science and technology and manufacturing.

The DMWG implemented the following principles and criteria aimed at strengthening South Africa-Iran trade, economic and investment relations:

Assessed the status of implementation of current areas of bilateral cooperation;

Identified strategic areas of future cooperation;

Identified responsible and specialist entities to monitor progress and secure implementation;

Isolated challenges and solutions in implementing bilateral projects;

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The DMWG also measured the implementation of the outcomes of the State Visit of President Zuma to the Islamic Republic in April 2016 and, in particular, progress regarding the implementation of the eight Memoranda of Understanding concluded during President Zuma's visit. In this respect, the DMWG confirmed that solid progress had been recorded and follow-up activities will be undertaken in the following areas:

In the Banking sector, measures will be implemented in support of normalising financial relations and to create an enabling environment for business on both sides to conclude transparent financial transactions inclusive of the establishment of corresponding banking relations.

A Joint Trade and Industry Working Group will be established in accordance with the provisions of the MOU concluded between the Parties to focus on joint expertise transfers and skills development, resources and research capacity, combined market size including competitive advantages in targeted and mutually agreed upon sectors. In this respect the formalisation and operationalization of the South Africa–Iran Business Council has been identified as a strategic priority in strengthening bilateral trade and commercial relations.

A Joint Energy Working Group will be created to explore bilateral cooperation within the broader energy sector in support of SA's energy security needs including hydro, solar and wind energy, geo thermal energy, energy efficiency, technology exchanges, skills development, gas infrastructure development as well as cooperation in the petrochemical refining sector.

Within the ambit of Science and Technology, the Parties agreed to intensify cooperation pertaining to skills transfers, innovation and training and technology exchanges between research foundations in identified areas. Science and technology play an important role in the National Development Plans of both countries

With regard to Transport, a process is underway to establish direct air links to stimulate trade and tourism between South Africa and Iran.

The MOU in Agriculture concluded between South Africa and Iran provides for the establishment of Technical Teams aimed at strengthening cooperation in the export/import of agricultural products, agro processed goods, fisheries and aquaculture.

Defence cooperation will be formalised with the conclusion of a bilateral Defence Cooperation Agreement, which is currently under negotiation.

Bilateral Cooperation in the fields of Water and Sanitation will continue, with particular emphasis on skills transfer and exchanges pertaining to service delivery in the rural context.

The DMWG agreed that the lifting of nuclear related sanctions against Iran in January 2016 as part of the Joint Comprehensive Plan Of Action (JCPOA) reached between Iran and the P5 +1 augurs well for the consolidation and elevation of the full spectrum of the bilateral relationship.

South Africa and Iran have maintained a close and significant relationship over many decades. Despite the damage done to particularly trade, economic and investment relations as a result of unilateral international sanctions against the Islamic Republic, the

DMWG confirmed the positive momentum and strong nature of the bilateral relationship.



Photo by Jacoline Schoonees

The two countries have agreed to deepen diplomatic, political, trade, economic and investment relations. The DMWG called on South African and Iranian business to utilise the high potential that exists to conduct mutually beneficial trade and commercial relations in the following priority sectors:

Petrochemical, gas exploration and alternative energy;
Agricultural products agro processed goods and services and food processing equipment;

Automotive industries and manufacturing;

Mining, raw materials and strategic metals;

Medical and pharmaceutical;

Chemicals, forestry , paper and furniture;

Clothing, textiles and leather;

Construction, engineering and transport;

Financial, banking and insurance;

Tourism, hospitality infrastructure, management and training;

Retail and franchising; and

Ocean economy

The DMWG also reviewed global and regional peace, security and stability challenges in relation to international terrorism and the serious threat of extremist violence to human security. The Parties agreed to cooperate as part of a credible and constructive international effort to end the conflict in Syria and for the humanitarian devastation to be addressed internationally and regionally as a matter of extreme urgency. The DMWG also underscored the critical necessity to address the Palestinian question and for serious dialogue and negotiations to commence aimed at implementing a lasting, fair and just solution.

The DMWG confirmed the importance of regular high level bilateral dialogue to implement decisions of the SA-Iran Joint Commission and the role of the DMWG in monitoring and guiding agreed upon bilateral projects. The DMWG also confirmed that the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran President HE Hassan Rouhani has accepted the invitation from HE President Jacob Zuma to visit South Africa in early 2017 during which time the SA-Iran Joint Commission is also scheduled to meet.

ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND COOPERATION

South African Deputy Transport Minister and Deputy Public Enterprises Minister Visit to Iran

South African Deputy Transport Minister, Ms. Chikunga, and Deputy Public Enterprises Minister, Mr. Magwanishe, visited Iran on November 20-25, 2017. The Deputy Ministers arrived in Bandar Abbas and visited Shahid Rajaee Port. The Deputy Ministers also had meetings in Tehran to explore possible areas for mutual cooperation in the transport and infrastructure sectors.



Ambassador Whitehead Attends Mandela Day Commemoration



United Nation's Information Centre and Ketab-Raneh jointly organized an event to commemorate Nelson Mandela Day on 09 August 2016 targeting the Iranian youth. The host, Ms. Sarvenaz Heraner, opened the event by some remarks on how she came to know the great South African Leader, Nelson Mandela, and how this knowledge inspired her in achieving her goals. UNIC Tehran Director read the message by the UN Secretary General, Ban Ki Moon, delivered on the occasion of Mandela Day. Ambassador Whitehead, then, delivered a speech on how Nelson Mandela's worldview fits into the Iranian society and its discourse. The event also featured the premier of a song written and composed by a young Iranian composer. Iranian teenagers and youth who were eagerly listening to the speeches were also actively participating in the event by reading poems on Mandela in English and Farsi.

The South African Ambassador offered a Farsi translation of Mandela's autobiography *A Long Walk to Freedom* as a symbolic gesture to Ketab-Raneh team who are devoted to motivate the youth to read literature.

The full-text of Ambassador Whitehead's speech follows:

2016 UN MANDELA DAY: REMARKS BY AMBASSADOR ARCHIE WHITEHEAD OF SOUTH AFRICA

Ms Sarvaz Heraner
Ms Maria Dotsenko
Distinguished Guests

I am honoured to be invited to this event. Nelson Mandela might be the father of our nation, but he belongs to all of us because he taught us a universal lesson about the power of peace and reconciliation. Madiba taught us that you can't win by force. The only way to truly resolve conflicts is through compromise, justice and forgiveness.

In his words, 'If you want to make peace with your enemy, you have to work with your enemy. Then he becomes your partner.'

This is not a new lesson. It has been the message of the greatest people throughout history, from Buddha to Jesus to the Prophet Mohammed (Peace be Upon Him).

In our current context, I am reminded of the words of Imam Hussein who said 'The most merciful person is he who forgives when he is able to revenge.'

Otherwise, as Mahatma Gandhi, another icon of the South African struggle, warned us: 'An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind.'

Regrettably, Mandela's work is still not done. There is yet much that we have to do to address Global Apartheid, the inequities and injustices that plague the currently World Order, to realise the vision of humanity and dignity that Madiba sought for us all.

As Ambassador to Iran, I am inspired by the way that Iran has honoured Mandela's wisdom in its relations with the world. What better gift to celebrate Mandela's birthday - and what better monument to Mandela's legacy - than the message of peace, hope and reconciliation that Iran and the P5 plus 1 have given us over this past year? I was a comrade of Madiba, and I know for certain that he would be extremely proud of the example that Iran and its people are setting for the world.

President Mandela was a big fan of Iran, including its dedication to fighting for justice and empowerment of the poor and oppressed, as Iran did in sacrificing so much to support the anti-apartheid struggle. This is why he visited Iran very soon after his release from prison, to personally say 'thank you.'

In conclusion, I would like to congratulate Ketab-Raneh for the excellent work that you are doing to promote reading among the youth. I am a great impressed by the young people of Iran, who I admire for having so much energy and optimism, and such a hunger to learn and succeed. Your grit and determination are also an example that the rest of the world would do well to learn from.

I have brought along with me a Farsi translation of Nelson Mandela's autobiography, 'Long Walk to Freedom', to add to your mobile bookshop, so that the youth of Iran can draw on Madiba first-hand to help guide you in your work to build a better world for all.

I thank you.

The Political Counsellor's Visit to Esfahan University

Mr. Ahmed Seedat, the Political Counsellor, was invited by the Messengers of Peace (M.O.P.) to visit the University of Esfahan on May 15-16, 2016 to see the activities and work at the English Faculty. The Counsellor met with Professor Jannesari and the Dr. Ebn-e Rasoul, the Dean of the Faculty of Foreign Languages. Educational and cultural cooperation between South Africa and the University of Esfahan were discussed.



Political & Trade Counsellors Visit Chabahar



Mr. Ahmed Seedat, the Political Counsellor and Ms. Sara Dien, the Trade Counsellor represented South Africa in the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) Free Trade Zone Authorities Meeting on 19-20 May 2016 at Chabahar Free Trade-Industrial Zone (CFZ) in Chabahar, Sistan and Baluchestan Province. South Africa welcomes this initiative by Iran to deepen economic cooperation amongst Indian Ocean Rim member states.

Medical Tourism: WHY SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa is one of the most popular destinations for medical tourism, boasting some of the best doctors and facilities in the world as well as many tourist attractions and should not be overlooked. Among its many attractions, the country offers highly affordable medical treatments as well as some of the world's best doctors and health care facilities, together with vacation options that are unrivalled anywhere else in the world. Since legendary surgeon Christiaan Barnard put South Africa's healthcare services on the map by performing the world's first heart transplant in Cape Town, the country's reputation for medical excellence has gone from strength to strength. Today, the country is ranked by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) as the leader in the African market for health tourism, and is a minor hub worldwide alongside nations like India, Singapore, and Thailand. South Africa offers a wide range of low-cost treatments, together with a level of professionalism and quality that sets its healthcare providers apart from the competition.

In addition to essential treatments, South Africa is well known for affordable cosmetic surgery procedures as well as fertility treatments, breast enlargements, cosmetic dentistry and others, creating a thriving medical tourism industry. A large number of medical tourists come from other countries within Africa, particularly for affordable infertility treatments. Many other patients also come from US, Australia, Germany, Italy, Britain, Netherlands, and other parts of Europe.

But there's more on offer than just medicine. Many popular 'surgeon and safari' packages combine affordable treatments at a cosmetic plastic surgery clinic with exciting features such as 5 star accommodation in and around Cape Town. A recovery program in a spa or a resort, and a safari tour, all included in a very affordable and attractive price. Many patients also choose to stay in the country for longer periods and take advantage of the abundant sunshine, world-class beaches, exciting sports, shopping, and a variety of other attractions that make South Africa a truly unique tourist destination. Some of the many reasons that South Africa is one of the world's most popular medical tourism destinations include:

- Modern living: Unlike many other African countries, urban South Africa and especially Cape Town offers a modern, cosmopolitan experience for medical travellers.
- Facilities: Medical tourists can expect to find highly



trained doctors working in modern, accredited hospitals and clinics with state-of-the-art equipment.

- Currency: Thanks to the weakness of the rand, hundreds of medical procedures are available at a comparatively low cost, with most surgeries coming in at roughly a third of the price for an equivalent procedure in the UK. Affordable breast augmentation, for example, costs around \$8000 in the UK, but only about \$3600 in South Africa. More minor treatments, such as botox injections, can be even cheaper – \$310 in the UK vs. \$70 in South Africa.

- Natural beauty: Those who want to take in the country's rich natural beauty and get away from the cities won't be disappointed either. Beautiful scenery countrywide, the opportunity to see wild animals in their natural habitats, and a variety of tranquil, natural settings all promote relaxation and recovery following a medical procedure.

- Language: English is widely spoken in most of the country, and especially in major cities like Cape Town, simplifying communication.

- Jetlag: As an added bonus, those coming for treatment abroad from Europe, the UK, and Africa at large will experience very little jetlag, making the journey an easier one.

All in all, South Africa is a unique and attractive destination for medical tourism, boasting world-class plastic surgeons and facilities to attend to all your medical needs. These outstanding healthcare services come together with five-star tourist attractions to make a holiday worth remembering.

All this comes at a price that is hard to beat, allowing you to take full advantage of all that South Africa has to offer. Our promise to you is to provide the best possible experience of Cape Town medical tourism, assisting you every step of the way, and ensuring that you leave fully satisfied. Book a medical vacation to South Africa today. Visit www.medicaltourismsa.com for further information.

Provincial Visits

Ambassador Whitehead, accompanied by Trade Section of the Embassy, visited few provinces of Iran as part of Mission's business plan to explore and identify business opportunities between South Africa and Iran.

The visits to the provinces provided great opportunity for the Mission to meet with various political & economic stakeholders of the provinces to discuss about South Africa's economy, investment opportunities & incentives, trade in different fields.

Visit to Kerman Province

Ambassador Whitehead, the South African Ambassador to Tehran, visited Kerman province, accompanied by the Trade Section, from 30 July – 2 August 2016. In this visit he met with the representative of the Governor General of Kerman province, Mr Zoka Asadi as a courtesy call and to identify business opportunities in the province. The meeting also provided an opportunity to raise the issues concerning the economic stronghold and South Africa's solid economic sectors such as mining, agriculture and automotive that have potentials for Kerman province.

Ambassador also met with the Governor of Bam, Mr. Ashk, Mr. Zorani: Deputy Governor of Bam for Political Affairs, Mr. Bahrami: Head of Public Relations, Mr. Jafari: Deputy Governor for Planning & Development, Ambassador, Economic Counsellor and Marketing Officer.

The province is known as "Miner Paradise" and there are 42 kinds of different minerals including copper, iron ore, chromite, coal, decorative stone



and construction material. The visit to the Kerman provided great opportunity for the Mission to meet with various political & economic stakeholders of province to discuss about South Africa's economy, investment opportunities & incentives, trade in mining, agriculture, automotive related industries.

The following are the main areas for bilateral cooperation between the two countries: Agriculture, mining, automotive, water, energy, promotion of trade and investments. The other potential areas for mutual cooperation include scientific cooperation in the solar engineering, ICT, medical, medical tourism, banking and transportation sectors.

Visit to Qazvin Province

Ambassador Whitehead paid a one-day visit to Qazvin Province, the 4th biggest industrial province in Iran, on 17 August 2016, accompanied by the Trade Section of the Embassy. He paid a courtesy visit to the Governor General of Qazvin Province, Dr. Hemmati, and a number of officials in the business sector. He also visited Iranchoob factory. Ambassador also visited BKA Industrial Group factory. They are manufacturers of pipe and fitting (GRE & FRP).

Dr. Hemmati provided the Ambassador with a summary of strengths and advantages of the prov-

ince. He said that Qazvin is a strategic province and there are huge potentials and opportunities for cooperation and joint venture between Qazvin and the South African companies. The opportunity also exists with the large number of knowledge-based companies in Qazvin. He mentioned that the province is strong in solar energy, auto industry, agriculture, etc.

Ambassador agreed with the important role of knowledge-based companies and said that these companies are requirement for progress in research. He said that it is possible to link some of our industries, universities, etc., in different fields such as technology, mathematics, physics, etc.

Visit to Lorestan Province

Ambassador visited Lorestan Province from 29 August – 01 September 2016. In this visit, he met with the Governor General of Lorestan, Mr Houshang Bazavand. The meeting also provided an opportunity to raise the issues concerning the economic stronghold and South Africa's solid economic sectors that have potentials for Lorestan province.

He also met the President of Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture of Khorramabad, Mr Selahvarzi, and a number of members of the Chamber. Major activities of Khorramabad Chamber of Commerce is in agriculture, minerals and construction stones (granite, marble, travertine, etc.), medicine and herbs (both human and veterinary), etc. Agriculture includes animal husbandry, poultry, crops, honey production, etc. The Chamber welcomes receiving business delegation from South Africa.

Ambassador Whitehead believed that the nature of Lorestan province reminds one of KZN province in South Africa. There are also very good opportunities in herbal medicine between Lorestan and South Africa since South Africa has huge number of indigenous herbs. There are opportunities for joint researches on different species. There are also opportunities for cooperation of the relevant universities of the two countries, especially following the signed agreement between the relevant department/ministry of the two countries.

South Africa is also strong in agriculture industry and can assist Lorestan province in its ongoing agro-industrial projects especially on agro pony green house as well as cross-breeding, and veterinary disease control.

Ambassador Whitehead also mentioned that Lorestan has good potential in tourism. The tourism infrastructure needs to be worked on. There



are a number of reputable South African companies who have successfully performed projects internationally, including in UAE and Brazil, who are interested in investing in Iran, building hotels, training, etc. These are areas of cooperation in this field.



He also said that South Africa has incentives for foreign direct investors. South Africa is capable of helping the province with developing its infrastructures in different fields such as airport, hotels, mines, etc. There are entities in South Africa such as IDC that contribute

in co-investment in different fields.

South Africa needs 500,000 tons of honey annually. This amount is being imported from other countries such as New Zealand. There is an opportunity for the Iranian companies to get into this market if they provide better quality and less expensive honey.

In return Iran can purchase other products from South Africa such as red meat, grapes, animal feed, chicken, etc. and it can be a good opportunity considering the fact that there are opposite seasons in the two countries.

Following the Joint Bilateral Commission between South Africa and Iran, since last year the governments of the two countries have started a framework of cooperation regarding research and development (R & D) which provides an opportunity for the Iranian and the South African companies to cooperate.