



**DEPUTY MINISTRY OF TOURISM
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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Congratulatory remarks by the Deputy Minister of Tourism Fish Mahlalela on the occasion of the National Day of the Republic of Korea (ROK)

2 October 2019

Programme Director,
Your Excellency, Ambassador Jong-dae Park and Madame Mi Sung Lim of the Republic of Korea,
Your Excellency, Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, Ambassador Bene M'Poko,
Ambassadors and High Commissioners,
Other Member of the Diplomatic Corps,
Officials from Government,
War Veterans of the Korean War of 1950-1953 and their Spouses,
Representatives from Business and Civil Society,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen

Allow me to extend our warmest greetings to you all.

It is my privilege today, on behalf of the Government and people of the Republic of South Africa, to extend congratulations to the Government and the people of the Republic of Korea, on the occasion of the celebration of your National Day. I wish to express special gratitude to His Excellency, Ambassador Park and Madame Mi Sung Lim for inviting us to this beautiful garden of their Official Residence. We look forward to sharing in the festivities!

Ladies and Gentlemen

Just like the Jacaranda blossoms all over Pretoria this time of the year, the bilateral relations between South Africa and the Republic of Korea have blossomed during the past year, with several prominent events that have contributed to closer ties between our two countries. Not only did our two Presidents meet bilaterally, for the first time, on the margins of the G20 Summit in Argentina in December last year, but our Foreign Ministers also met in July this year, when Minister Kang paid a very productive visit to South Africa, as part of a tour of several African countries. In addition, during August this year, the Deputy Speaker of the Korean National Assembly, the Honourable Juyoung Lee, paid a visit to South Africa, including a courtesy call on Minister Pandor, to further strengthen the bond of friendship between our two countries. Earlier today, as a matter of interest, South Africa's new Ambassador-designate to the Republic of Korea, Her Royal Highness, Princess Zenani Dlamini, arrived in Seoul to take up her new position as Head of Mission.

During the above-mentioned high-level engagements over the past year, the underlying message that was forthcoming from our leaders on both sides, was that South Africa and the Republic of Korea have many commonalities as global middle powers and that the relationship is constantly growing stronger, at many levels. It was highlighted, however, that more should be done to capitalise on the vast opportunities for cooperation that are still untapped, especially economically. Even though existing business ties

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between the two countries are well-established, with a major Korean investment footprint in South Africa and a total volume of bilateral trade of approximately R36 billion in 2018, there is ample scope for further diversifying the trade basket, and for the deepening and expansion of investment portfolios. South Africa thus welcomes closer economic cooperation and the Republic of Korea's continued keen interest in our country. With regards to the beneficiation of our natural resources and the manufacturing industries, in particular, we need innovative, reliable international partnerships with countries such as the Republic of Korea to assist with the development of potential growth sectors such as agriculture, aquaculture, energy, mining, shipping, transport and science and technology.

Excellencies

South Africa believes that our country and region have much to learn from the Republic of Korea's development experience, following Korea's history of oppression and the destruction of the Korean War of the 1950s. The Korean people were able to rise above these challenges, and to chart a path of economic development, prosperity and great achievements, within a very short space of time. Since then, Korea has experienced phenomenal success in their twin achievements of rapid economic growth and significant reductions in poverty. South Africa is faced with similar challenges. Our triple task of poverty alleviation, economic development and inequality compels us to learn from the Republic of Korea's good story. One of the important features of ROK's sustainability, was not only the speed, of growth which has continued for about 60 years, but also overcoming various kinds of adverse initial conditions. Korea's rise has been nothing short of miraculous and understanding the underlying mechanisms of such successful growth is invaluable to South Africa.

The notion of increased involvement in South Africa by the business community of the Republic of Korea, of course, also has relevance in terms of the latter's economic relationship with the rest of our Continent. In particular, in view of the trade and investment opportunities presented by the recently launched African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA), South Africa is convinced that Korean multinational enterprises could play a larger, and leading role, through mechanisms such as the Africa-Korea Forum. The Korean business community's engagement could be critical to further deepening the Africa-Korea relationship and to ensure the mutually beneficial "win-win" cooperation, based on trade and investment, that we both seek.

Along the same lines, South Africa was very pleased when the Republic of Korea in November 2017 joined the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), as a Dialogue Partner. South Africa is confident that the Republic of Korea will add great value to this multilateral forum, which links Africa with Asia, through enhanced co-operation to promote peace, stability and sustainable development.

Ladies and Gentlemen

I wish to make use of this opportunity to thank the Republic of Korea for how it is already contributing, in a tangible way, to some of South Africa's most critical development needs in the form of regular training offers to South Africans, in a wide range of technical areas. We also appreciate the support that the Korean Government is giving to some of our rural communities, through the "Saemaul Undong" mindset project – and we look forward to seeing the results. Africa is young, and has tremendous wealth in human capital resource. Korea's pioneering of vocational education, linking TVET programs to industrial demands is but one example of a learning area. We commend ROK's employment permit system (EPS) - a temporary migration program for low-skilled workers considered a good global practice among efforts toward the goal of co-development with mutual benefit of both sending and receiving nations. The EPS has accomplished several remarkable achievements, including a drastic reduction in migrants' cost burden, enhanced transparency, reduction in the share of workers overstaying, and improved access to worker protection. The promotion of mutual benefits of both sending and receiving nations (i.e. co-development) through labour mobility—facilitated by well-managed and controlled migration systems is increasingly recognized. These are policies that support control and co-existence, promoting integration and cohesion.

In South Africa, we are undertaking a similar process to regulate foreign business trading, particularly in the Small Business sector. This is intended to drive policy discourse on co-development, and co-existence as a result maximizing the economic benefits of temporary migration while also ensuring the well-being of both migrants and locals.

Your Excellency

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Our bilateral relationship, is on a healthy footing, with solid economic ties; regular technical exchanges and high level visits; and also the prospect of convening, early next year, the inaugural session of the Joint Cooperation Commission (JCC) in Seoul, at Ministerial level.

In conclusion, Ladies and Gentlemen, we look forward to the rest of the celebrations today, which essentially, promote people-to-people cooperation. Cultural exchanges play a pivotal role in bringing people together so that they can see each other as part of greater humanity - and belonging to the same global village. An occasion like this opens the door to dialogue, unity and global cultural development.

Ladies and Gentlemen

May you please join me in a toast to the everlasting friendship between the peoples of South Africa and the Republic of Korea.

I thank you.