



tourism

Department:  
Tourism  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Tourism House, 17 Trevenna Street, Sunnyside. Private Bag X 424, PRETORIA · 0001  
Tel + 27 (0) 12 444 6000· Fax + 27 (0) 12 444 7000. Call Center: 0860 121 929

## China-SA exchange programme gets off the ground

**Pretoria** - When Kamo Bosielo from Rustenburg took a giant leap of faith in 2013 and moved to Beijing to pursue his Masters in International Relations, he didn't know what awaited him.

From cultural differences, food and language, Bosielo was in for a few surprises. Life as he knew it would dramatically change.

"The opportunity to study in China brought a radical shift in my life. To live in a country that fearlessly defines itself on its own terms, sets its own agenda and which has created a unique institutional framework and has a dynamic culture and rich history, was an opportunity too good to pass," said Bosielo, who received a scholarship from the Department of Higher Education and Training.

The question Bosielo gets asked a lot is: 'Why China?' But for him the answer is straight forward: it is Africa and South Africa's largest trading partner and it is the second largest economy in the world.

"China is a fascinating country which challenges one's ideas of what is possible and what is permissible. Living there took away all perceived notions of how I saw the world. The more I become comfortable with the language and Chinese way of life and history, the more I get this unwavering sense of gratitude about what the world has to offer."

Bosielo also studied Mandarin before applying for a job at Huawei Technologies.

Bosielo is just the kind of person the South Africa-China High Level People-to-People Exchange Mechanism (PPEM) wants to see more of.

Inaugurated in Pretoria on Monday, the PPEM aims to cement mutual trust, friendship and strategic partnership and to further deepen cooperation between the two countries, especially in the areas of culture, education, communications, health, technology, sports, tourism, women advancement and youth.

South Africa is the only African country to have such a mechanism with China and is joining six other countries that China has launched similar mechanisms with, including the United States, Russia, United Kingdom, France, Indonesia as well as the European Union and regional organisations.

The PPEM will allow the two countries to exchange information, identify common objectives and strategies and create opportunities for people in both countries to benefit from the sharing of social, cultural and economic capital across government, academia, business and civil society.

"Often called soft diplomacy, learning about each other's world view, belief systems and way of life is a critical part of creating a better world for all," said Arts and Culture Minister Nathi Mthethwa, who co-chaired the opening session with Chinese Vice Premier Madame Liu Yandong said.

Minister Mthethwa underscored the importance of culture, saying it bears the imprint of humanity. Deputy Minister in the Presidency, Bhuthi Manamela, said the PPEM affords South Africa and China the opportunity to adopt a coordinated approach to key national priorities and strategic imperatives in the areas of cooperation of the PPEM.

"In most instances, countries focus on political and economic relations... If we do not strengthen relations at the level of people-to-people, then all other agreements become of no consequence because it is people who should drive these," Deputy Minister Manamela told **SAnews**.

## **Arts and culture**

Although there have been cultural exchanges between the two countries, Deputy Minister Manamela said the formalisation of these through the PPEM will consolidate existing relations.

The PPEM proposes several new cooperation projects in communication, arts and culture and tourism.

In arts and culture, the PPEM proposes a youth exchange programme in key sectors and develop a general partnership framework.

“We are proposing for next year an exchange with five young professionals, plus a coach for the establishment of a residency programme. For 2017/18 institutions that will benefit include performing arts and ballet institutions,” said Deputy Minister Manamela.

A research collaboration project through the South African Cultural Observatory is proposed to develop the creative industries sector, and to formalise research on mapping and measuring the creative sector in order to inform policy development.

There will also be a flagship research and development programme that will focus on Big Data under the broad field of Information and Communication Technology, as well as the establishment of a High-Tech Park in Gauteng.

According to the Deputy Minister, there are also plans for the development of an exchange programme for artisanal and technical skills development for young women. An exchange programme will also be developed to expose South African women to Chinese business skills, which could possibly lead to business partnerships for women. This programme will also foster collaboration on women’s issues at multilateral fora.

## **Tourism, hospitality**

More South African tourist guides and frontline staff will be trained in Mandarin to equip them to better service the market.

A scholarship for South African professional chefs to advance their qualifications through a specialisation course on Chinese traditional cuisine for 20 to 30 chefs per year is being mulled.

Consideration will also be given to an exchange programme of 20 graduate chefs with the Yangzhou School of Cookery and Hotels as well as the training of up to 20 unemployed graduates in various skills within the hospitality sector to address unemployment.

## **Communication**

The PPEM proposes collaboration between radio and television broadcasters to actively cooperate in news coverage and promotion of cooperation in documentaries, television drama, film and animation.

There are also plans to promote technical exchange and cooperation in the field of public radio and television broadcasting, and the creation of communication and training opportunities for general and technical professionals.

Deputy Minister Manamela said it is the ordinary South African and Chinese citizens that will be the greatest beneficiaries of the PPEM.

“Through this PPEM, we want to see a deeper cooperation between our two countries through strong bonds of friendship between our people, an enlightened understanding of our cultures, and a commitment to work towards a more just and peaceful world.”

He commended the vision of the PPEM. “It is about driving people to action and we are excited about the signing of the agreements, which affirms the commitment from both countries on this.”

The opening session saw the signing of three agreements and three memoranda of understanding in the areas of higher education and training, youth, research, arts and culture and communications.

South Africa and China share a common developmental agenda based on the principle of internationalism and enjoy strong diplomatic and trade relations.

China is South Africa's biggest trading partner and also the second biggest economy in the world. The two countries share membership of and participate as partners in numerous international bodies including BRICS, the Group of 77 + China, G20 and are co-chairs of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation.

South Africa's bilateral relations with China are guided broadly through mechanisms such as the Beijing Declaration establishing the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, the Bi-National Commission, Joint Inter-Ministerial Working Group on Cooperation (JWG), Strategic Dialogue Mechanism, and the 5-10 Year Strategic Framework on Cooperation signed in 2014.

**Source:** [SAnews.gov.za](http://SAnews.gov.za)