



**MINISTRY OF TOURISM  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

Private Bag X424, Pretoria, 0001, South Africa. Tel. (+27 12) 444 6780, Fax (+27 12) 444 7027  
Private Bag X9154, Cape Town, 8000, South Africa. Tel. (+27 21) 469 5800, Fax: (+27 21) 465 3216

**Remarks by Deputy Minister Tokozile Xasa of the Department of Tourism at the  
Republic of Kazakhstan National Day Celebration, Pretoria Country Club**

**1 December 2014**

Programme Director,  
Ambassador Kaliyev,  
Members of Diplomatic Corps,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Government and people of South Africa, it is an honour for me to be present on this special day – the first celebration of the National Day of the Republic of Kazakhstan in South Africa. My country attaches great importance to its relationship with Kazakhstan and regards Kazakhstan, the regional leader in Central Asia, as a staunch friend and ally.

South Africa and Kazakhstan established diplomatic relations in 1992 on the eve of South Africa's historic, first democratic elections on 27 April 1994, which finally ended the inhuman system of racial segregation called Apartheid. As a nation, we are forever grateful to all our friends from abroad who were in solidarity with us during those trying times and who supported our struggle for liberation, including the people of Kazakhstan! Our freedom is a product of our people's struggles and international solidarity.

South Africa's decision to establish a resident Mission in Kazakhstan in 1994, our first, and to date only official footprint in the Central Asian region, was based on our recognition that Kazakhstan, the world's ninth largest landmass, demonstrated the greatest potential to build a mutually beneficial relationship with South Africa – two newly emerging democracies in geopolitically reconfigured neighbourhoods.

The new democratic South Africa, like the newly-independent Kazakhstan, also took the momentous decision to voluntarily forsake its inherited nuclear arsenal. These principled actions is yet another strong link between our two countries.

South Africa subsequently opened its Embassy in Almaty in 2005, and in 2008, we transferred our resident Embassy to the national capital in Astana. To complete the picture, the Republic of Kazakhstan opened its Embassy in South Africa during December last year.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This year marks 22 years of our formal diplomatic relations. Last month, from 5 – 6 November, our two countries held a successful 4th Round of Bilateral Consultations in Astana. The South African delegation was led by Deputy Minister NomaIndia Mfeketo, and the Kazakh delegation was led by Deputy Minister Askar Mussinov.

We agreed to strengthen bilateral relations and emphasized the importance of establishing cooperation in a variety of spheres, such as broadening and deepening political dialogue and high-level visits between our two countries. South Africa is keen to host President Nursultan

Nazarbayev on a State Visit during the period 2015 – 2016. It is also likely that Foreign Minister Erlan Idrissov will visit in the first half of 2015.

During her visit to Astana, Deputy Minister Mfeketo was afforded a platform to present a lecture focussing on South Africa's relations with Kazakhstan and the potential that it holds for both countries at the Kazakh Humanitarian Law University (KAZGUU), under the auspices of the KAZGUU Diplomatic Club, launched this year, with the South African Ambassador as its first chair.

This year, 2014, also marks the 20th year of our historic transition from Apartheid to a free democratic South African under the wise leadership of our beloved and revered President, the late Nelson Mandela.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As Kazakhstan celebrates this important day, we wish President Nazarbayev and his Administration every success in their endeavours, under the auspices of Strategy 2050, aimed at improving the lives of their citizens. As you are aware, Strategy 2050's key goal aims to ensure that Kazakhstan becomes one of the 30 most developed nations by 2050. Our own National Development plan aims to place South Africa on a similar development trajectory, to erase the present pattern of poverty, inequality and unemployment, which are the outcomes of a racially discriminative historical framework.

Notwithstanding the strides which our two countries make on the political front, we are of the view that the economic ties between South Africa and Kazakhstan have far greater potential than what has materialized thus far according to our bilateral trade and investment statistics. Kazakhstan is a hub for Central Asia and the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) and South Africa is a hub for the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

I am convinced that there is a bright future ahead of us if the business communities on both sides venture a little bit further than before in their quest to find the right opportunities, or partners. Now that Kazakhstan has established a resident Embassy in South Africa, we are in a prime position to complement each other's economic diplomacy efforts and to share such information, to the benefit of our respective people.

South Africa strongly believes that the continent of Africa, which has a market size of nearly one billion inhabitants and which is blessed with vast natural resources, is on the rise as the next growth region of the world. South Africa's future is bound to this Continent and, therefore, we cannot succeed as a country on our own but only as part of a broader African success story. We believe, within this context, that South Africa is ideally positioned to be the gateway or springboard for foreign companies into the rest of the African continent. Our long-term vision is to realize a prosperous and a stable Africa, without conflict and poverty, and to integrate our economies through boosting intra-regional trade. Africa is at the centre of South Africa's foreign policy. Kazakhstan can truly benefit from joining hands with South African companies in this regard to exploit trilateral economic opportunities.

South Africa wishes to congratulate Kazakhstan on securing the bid to host the EXPO 2017, which will give Kazakhstan the opportunity to showcase its potential and achievements to the global community.

In conclusion, South Africa is committed to promoting the quest for a better world through our international bilateral and multilateral engagements. Thus South Africa and Kazakhstan have agreed to explore areas of mutual cooperation and support at the multilateral level.

Please join me in proposing a toast to the President and the people of Kazakhstan.

I thank you.