



**REMARKS BY MR FISH MAHLALELA, DEPUTY MINISTER OF TOURISM DURING
THE JAMAICAN DIAMOND JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA ON 11
AUGUST 2023**

Your Excellency, Mrs Joan Thomas Edwards, High Commissioner of Jamaica

Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, Ambassador His Excellency, Salih Omar Abdu

Dean of the GRULAC Group, Ambassador Her Excellency, Mairin Moreno-Mérida

Ambassadors and High Commissioners

Members of the Diplomatic Corps

Ladies and Gentlemen

It gives me a great pleasure to extend warm greetings and best wishes of the Government and the people of South Africa to the Government and People of Jamaica on this auspicious occasion.

The liberation struggle of both countries from our colonial masters created an umbilical cord that will always mark solid relations between the two countries.

We are assembled here today to celebrate Jamaica's Diamond Jubilee Anniversary of Independence, a significant milestone marking Jamaica's independence from the United Kingdom on the 6th of August 1962.

The importance of this day to the Government and people of Jamaica cannot be overstated and the emancipation from colonialism reflects the strength and pride of the Jamaican people.

Your Excellency,

Distinguished Guests,

As you are aware, South Africa and Jamaica have strong historical and political ties with cordial diplomatic relations that have been successfully maintained for the past 29 years.

The Government of South Africa values its relations with Jamaica.

South Africa remains forever humbled by the display of jubilation demonstrated by the Jamaican people during the visit of the founding father of our democracy, the late former President Nelson Mandela to Jamaica in 1991.

Mr. Nelson Mandela received a thunderous and enormous welcome at the Jamaican Parliament, at the University of the West Indies, at the National Stadium and also in the streets of Jamaica.

The Nelson Mandela Park and Nelson Mandela Highway in Jamaica are a good symbol of our friendship, shared heritage, and solidarity.

South Africa and Jamaica last year concluded the Inaugural Political Consultations at Senior Officials Level during which the two parties agreed to strengthen relations and cooperation in several areas such as: arts and culture, agribusiness, health, science and technology, sport, tourism and trade and investment.

Our former President Thabo Mbeki at the conclusion of the meeting of heads of the Caribbean community in 2003 remarked “With your permission, we will tell your brothers and sisters across the Atlantic, that the leaders and peoples of the Caribbean are determined to intensify the struggle, acting together with the leaders and peoples of Africa, to ensure that our common dream for the renaissance of the peoples of African descent is no longer deferred”.

Our struggle continues even today where we wage an intense war against triple challenges of poverty, inequality and unemployment, for our people to enjoy the fruits of the liberation.

These renewed airlinks between South Africa and Latin America will also benefit tourism and business travel between our countries and regions.

On tourism, we agreed to facilitate cooperation and the exchange of best practices in eco-tourism, adventure tourism, tourism investment, and multi-destination tourism.

Furthermore, we look forward to engaging with the Global Tourism Resilience and Crisis Management Centre in Jamaica.

Your Excellency, we welcome Jamaica's proposal for a life-sized sculpture of the Right Excellent Marcus Mosiah Garvey in the Freedom Park Monument in Pretoria, and the inscription of the name of Marcus Garvey at Freedom Park on the distinguished 'Wall of Names'.

This initiative is but one of many that could strengthen our bonds of friendship and Pan Africanism.

We owe it to the legacy of Marcus Mosiah Garvey to cultivate our shared identity, and our shared heritage and history as Africans.

In this regard, we should remember Marcus Garvey's:

Quote

"A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture, is like a tree without roots".

End quote

As South Africans, we are deeply moved by the pioneers of Reggae music such as Bob Marley, Rita Marley, Bunny Wailer, Peter Tosh and Burning Spear, whose musical careers were marked by their distinctive vocal and song writing styles.

Their contribution to music increased the visibility of Jamaican music worldwide and made them global figures in popular culture, and much beloved icons in South Africa and Africa. They also played a significant role in raising awareness about apartheid in South Africa through their music and activism.

They used this platform to advocate for racial equality and to support the liberation struggles in Africa. Peter Tosh was awarded (posthumous) with the prestigious Companions of OR Tambo Award at the recent Presidential Awards Ceremony.

Sport inspires South Africans and Jamaicans and our global icon Nelson Mandela had this to say that "sport has the power to change the world". Nelson Mandela was not wrong when he coined that phrase! He continued with "Sport has the power to inspire.

It has the power to unite people in a way that little else does. It speaks to youth in a language they understand.”

We would like to congratulate Jamaican netball team for their win against the South African counterparts at the Women’s Netball World Cup in Cape Town. We had hoped to see Jamaica in the finals!

We are also thankful for Jamaica’s efforts to promote Netball in Gugulethu township.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

South Africa views Jamaica as an important partner in the multilateral fora and as a principal member of the African diaspora, which the African Union (AU) correctly embraced as its sixth region.

Importantly, during the Senior Political Consultations last year, the two parties agreed to strengthen cooperation through the African Union – CARICOM partnership and South Cooperation through the NAM and the G77 plus China to advance the development agenda of the South and Global Governance reforms.

Your Excellency,

On behalf of President Ramaphosa, the Government and People of South Africa, I would like to reaffirm our continued support and unwavering determination to the strengthening of our bilateral cooperation.

In conclusion, let me again take great pleasure to and yet again, convey to the government and people of Jamaica, best wishes for peace and prosperity.

I thank you!