



# SOUTH AFRICAN EMBASSY NEWSLETTER

## ASTANA MAY 2016



### South Africa wins global Diplomatic Service Award



Minister of Department of International Relations and Cooperation, H.E. Nkoana-Maite Mashabane

The World Affairs Council in Washington, DC has named South Africa as the 2016 recipient of the Distinguished Diplomatic Service Award. The award was received on 29 March 2016 by His Excellency Mzinwa Mahlangu, Ambassador of South Africa to the United States, on behalf of the South African government.

South African is the first African country to receive this award.

The World Affairs Council Honors recognize organizations which demonstrate an outstanding commitment to global education, international affairs and global communications.

International Relations and Cooperation Minister Maite Nkoana-Mashabane said: "South Africa is truly humbled to receive this prestigious award. This recognition will further inspire and encourage our diplomats who work 24/7 around the world to advance our country's national interests".

### Head of Mission's last Freedom Day celebration in Kazakhstan.



The South African Embassy in the Republic of Kazakhstan celebrated the 22nd anniversary of its Freedom Day on 27 April 2016 at the Marriott Hotel in Astana. The event was attended by representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, high level Kazakh Government Officials, Heads of Missions and Diplomats, International Organisations, Universities, business persons and South Africans residing in Astana.

Ambassador Mr. Shirish M. Soni opened the official part of the celebration by addressing the guests. During his speech, he informed that it was his last Freedom Day celebration in Astana, and he mentioned some of the latest positive developments regarding relations with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan.

The Guest of Honour, Mr. Galymzhan Koishybayev, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, congratulated South Africa on the 22nd Anniversary of a free South Africa and stated the excellent bilateral relations that exist between the two countries. During his speech he highlighted the contribution of Ambassador Shirish M. Soni during his service as the South African Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary since 2011, such as the opening of the producing factory of armoured cars of the "Kazakhstan Engineering" National Company and the South African company «Paramount Group» in Astana.

The Freedom Day celebration included a performance of the African group Kilimanjaro, who delighted guests with their energetic African dancing and drumming and surprised everyone with the singing of songs in African,

English and Kazakh languages. The performance of the Kazakhstan famous singer Mr. Parviz Nazarov created a special allure of the celebration, so that the guests joined him in singing his popular hits.

Ambassador Soni's family members joined him during his last year's celebration; and his daughter-in-law provided a special signature recipe of her Soni dish for the menu of the National Day.

### Lectures in Astana and Almaty by famous Professor Barry Spitz



Professor Barry Spitz and Ambassador Shirish M. Soni On 25 April 2016 South African Ambassador to Kazakhstan Mr. Shirish M. Soni and Professor Barry Kuper Spitz delivered guest lectures at KAZGUU University.

Professor B.K. Spitz spoke about The New Tax World after the Panama Papers.

Ambassador Soni shared his valuable experience in tax and revenue services with diplomats and heads of international organisations, students, their teachers and staff of KAZGUU University.

### Scholarship to the students named after former Honorary Consul of South Africa in Almaty



Mr. Nurlan Kapparov, former Honorary Consul of South Africa in Almaty, Kazakhstan

A scholarship named after former Head of "Kazatomprom", Mr. Nurlan Kapparov will be awarded to the students who enter the Kennedy School of the Harvard University. It was announced by the spouse of the Minister of National economy, Yerbolata Dos-



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sayev, Mrs. Gulnar Dossayeva on her Facebook page.

The scholarships will be awarded to students from Kazakhstan (priority) and also to ones from countries of Central Asia.

Mrs. Dossayeva noted that the scholarship will be given annually. The best students will be chosen by the Admission office of the Harvard Kennedy School (HKS).

For more information please see: [http://tengrinews.kz/kazakhstan\\_news/postupivshim-garvardskiy-universitet-kazahstantsam-291537/](http://tengrinews.kz/kazakhstan_news/postupivshim-garvardskiy-universitet-kazahstantsam-291537/)

### KAZGUU Spouses event



Spouses of Heads of Missions



On 20th April 2016 a KAZGUU Spouses Club was launched. The event was organised by Mrs Ruweida Soni, Spouse of H.E. Mr Shirish M. Soni, Ambassador of South Africa to the Republic of Kazakhstan.

The guests did introductory tour through KAZGUU and were shown the International Library with books donated by Embassies and the Academic Diplomatic Club Room.

This was followed by a karaoke session. Invited guests included Mrs. Assel Salzhanova, spouse of the head of the Diplomatic Business Club and the Altyn Kyran Foundation, as well as

Mrs. Zhanara Mussinova, spouse of the former Deputy Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan responsible for Asia and Africa.

This event was an opportunity for spouses of the Heads of Diplomatic Missions to expand the outreach and cooperation with KAZGUU University.

### Ambassador Soni met with Mazhilis Deputy



Mazhilis Deputy, Mr. Mukhtar Yerman and SA Ambassador, Shirish M. Soni

South African Ambassador to Kazakhstan Mr. Shirish M. Soni on 11 April 2016 met with Mr. Mukhtar Yerman, deputy of the Mazhilis and member of the Committee of International Affairs.

### Ambassador Soni is building cooperation in the geology sector



President of the Kazakh Association of Petroleum Geologists, Mr. Bazarbai Kuandykov

South African Ambassador to Kazakhstan Mr. Shirish M. Soni met with the President of Kazakh Association of Petroleum Geologists, Mr. B. Kuandykov on 15 April 2016. During the meeting they discussed the hosting of a roundtable in Kazakhstan to promote South Africa's mining industry and cooperation between South Africa and Kazakhstan as well as participation of delegates from Kazakhstan in the 35th International Geological Congress to be held in Cape Town from 27 August to 4 September 2016.

### Lecture by Ambassador Soni at Nazarbayev University



Ambassador Soni and students during the lecture

South African Ambassador to Kazakhstan Mr. Shirish M. Soni was invited to deliver a lecture on Project Management at the NAZARBAYEV University on 19 April 2016. Ambassador Soni shared his valuable experiences in project management with master degree students, their teachers and staff of the NAZARBAYEV University.

### 14th International Festival of Language and Culture



South African stall at International School 'Nur Orda'

South African artifacts, provided by the South African Embassy in Astana, were displayed at the exhibition of the organized by the International School



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Nur Orda at the Kazakhstan Concert Hall on 30 April 2016.

### Maties professor elected to UN committee



Prof. Sandra Liebenberg

A Stellenbosch University professor has been elected to serve on the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

Sandra Liebenberg, who occupies the HF Oppenheimer chair in human rights law in the university's law faculty, was nominated by the Department of International Relations and Cooperation in recognition of her "extensive experience in human rights law, particularly in the area of economic, social and cultural rights".

The UN Economic and Social Council elected Liebenberg and the Egyptian candidate Mohamed Ezzeldin Abdel-Moneim as candidates representing Africa. Their four-year term begins on January 1.

The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights is a mechanism for defending and promoting economic, social and cultural rights, and has a mandate to specifically monitor fulfilment of states' obligations under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. It is composed of 18 independent experts.

### South African Runner wins annual Palestine Marathon in Bethlehem



South African runner Mervin Steenkamp

BDS South Africa joins other NGOs and South Africans in congratulating South African runner Mervin Steenkamp for winning this year's Palestine Marathon 4 April 2016. The

run, held annually since 2012, takes place in the Holy Town of Bethlehem in Palestine with over 4000 runners. The marathon has a more than 45 percent female participation with runners and teams from across the world.

The symbolic event is a 42km (26-mile) sports activity in protest against Israeli restrictions on Palestinian movement. It kicks off at the Church of the Nativity in the old area of Bethlehem.

This year's winner, Mervin Steenkamp, of Cape Town, finished the race in 2:35:36. Steenkamp ran in support of the Palestinian Children's Relief Fund (PCRF), a group raising money for paediatric healthcare in Palestine.

[Click here to read the UN agency's statement supporting the annual Palestine Marathon.](#)

### Beautiful South Africa!

Sometimes the best treasures are on your doorstep. If you're from Durban, that is the case. If you're planning to visit Durban, be assured, there is a whole lot more to this city than just beautiful beaches. Here are places we think are pretty amazing:



Yes, believe it or not, Durban has its own Castle, Codemore Castle, tucked away in the heart of the Kenneth Stainbank Nature Reserve, surrounded by giant Yellowwood trees. It was built by Dering Stainbank in 1885 as a family home and is situated just South of Durban city.

### Emalangen Hill

Durban people often see photos or hear of spots where you can see snow on the Drakensberg (in winter) and at the same time see the ocean and harbour. Such a place exists. Emalangen Hill, near Durban Green Corridor's Isithumba Adventure Centre is surprisingly easy to access, in fact it's even accessible by sedan car and probably less than a 30 minute drive from Botha's hill. The area includes some of the most dramatic scenery you will find in the Valley of a 1000 Hills.

### Inanda Mountain.

The best views in Durban. About a 30 minute drive from Durban central is Inanda Mountain, an epic spot with cliffs plummeting down to the shores of Inanda Dam, the best outlook anywhere in Durban.

### Mzinyathi Falls



The magnificent Mzinyathi Falls are less than a 20 minute drive from Gateway shopping centre. Guided hiking trails down into the gorge can also be arranged through the Durban Green Corridor.

### Durban's own Rastafarian Caves



The Mzinyathi Gorge is also home to the "Rastafarian Caves" – these caves are home to a community of Rastafarians, many of which have normal jobs and commute back to the caves for worship on weekends. arrange a guided experience to these caves.

### Beachwood Mangroves



Right at the uMngeni Mouth, near the Durban Green Corridor GreenHub are the Beachwood Mangroves. This 76-hectare reserve, not 5 minutes from the city centre is a National Monument and consists of rare mangrove swamp forest and important estuarine habitat at the mouth of the Umgeni River.