



SOUTH AFRICAN EMBASSY NEWSLETTER

ASTANA JANUARY 2015



Amb Soni's message to President Nazarbayev on the Day of the First President



President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, H.E. Nursultan Nazarbayev

On the Day of the First President on 1 December, Ambassador S. M. Soni in a message to President Nursultan Nazarbayev, Ambassador S.M. Soni repeated the phrase which he coined in 2012, "The President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, H. E. President Nursultan Nazarbayev is following in the footsteps of Mahatma Gandhi, Martine Luther King and Nelson Mandela."

Like Indians are proud to say we have Mahatma Gandhi, like Americans are proud to say we have Martin Luther King, like South Africans are proud to say we have Nelson Mandela, Kazakhstani citizens should be proud to say we have Nursultan Nazarbayev.

Ambassador S. M. Soni wished President Nursultan Nazarbayev good health, success in all his endeavors and happiness. He also said that he wishes the President to see the materialization of the five key programmes and 100 Concrete Steps.

Interview available on:

<https://kaztube.kz/video/223136>

South Africa becomes closer to Kazakhstan



President Nursultan Nazarbayev on the opening of Paramount factory in Astana

Paramount Group, Africa's largest privately owned defence and aerospace business, announced a strategic collaboration with Kazakhstan Engineering Distribution to establish a manufacturing plant in Kazakhstan for the production of military armoured vehicles and civilian buses.

The factory which is located in Astana, the capital of Kazakhstan, is expected to produce between 120 and 360 vehicles per year and create 150 skilled jobs.

The beginning of production coincided with a visit on 30 November 2015 by the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Pres Nursultan Naz-

arbayev, accompanied by the Minister of Defence, Mr. Imangali Tasmagambetov, the Chairman of Paramount Group, Mr. Ivor Ichikowitz and the Chairman of Kazakhstan Engineering, Mr. Yerlan Idrissov.

The 15 000 square metre facility will create 150 jobs and was built by Kazakhstan Paramount Engineering (KPE), a joint venture between the Paramount Group and Kazakhstan Engineering Distribution.

KPE CEO is reported by CA-News as saying that Kazakhstan plans to export 50 armoured vehicles to Jordan next year, after signing a deal with Jordan last week. KPE hopes to export vehicles to 12 countries in the Commonwealth of Independent States, Middle East, China and Russia.

This is a very important milestone in the strengthening of ties between Kazakhstan and South Africa. The defence and aerospace industry is one of the most strategic areas of cooperation between nation states."

Round table "Participation of the Republic of Kazakhstan in the 21st session of the UFFCCC Conference (COP 21)"



Ambassador S.M. Soni participated in the round table "Participation of the Republic of Kazakhstan in the 21st session of the UNFCCC Conference (COP 21)" organized by the Ministry of Energy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, OSCE and Green Academy held on 23 November 2015. The roundtable provided feedback on the position that Kazakhstan adopted for COP 21.

The meeting acknowledged the consistent role played by the Embassy of the Republic of South Africa in Astana in assisting the Republic of Kazakhstan to gain support for its positions by the G77 + China since 2012. The meeting also accepted the proposal made by Ambassador Soni encouraging the Kazakh delegation to work very closely with the South Africa delegation during the COP 21 negotiations. His Excellency shared his government's confidence in negotiator Ambassador Nozipho Mxakatho-Diseko, who was leading the discussions on behalf of the G77 + China. The meeting was informed that Her Excellency, Ms Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, the Chairperson of the African Union, will also be attending COP 21

and 1 December 2015 will focus on Africa at COP 21.

Meeting with the Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Yerlan Nyssanbayev.



South African Ambassador H.E. Mr. S. M. Soni met with the Deputy Minister of Agriculture Mr. Yerlan N. Nyssanbayev.

A meeting was held between the Deputy Minister of Agriculture Mr. Yerlan Nysanbayev and Ambassador S. M. Soni 4 November 2015. The parties discussed the XIV World Forestry Congress which was held in South Africa, support provided by South African academics to address the challenges facing Kazakhstan with managing the death of saiga antelopes and joint cooperation in the agricultural sector.

KAZGUU Seminar "European Day against death penalty".



H.E. Ambassador Shirish M. Soni during his speech on death penalty

Together with Penal Reform International (PRI) Office in Central Asia, the Embassies of the Republic of South Africa, the European Delegation, France, Vatican and the Swiss Confederation arranged a seminar in KAZGUU on the death penalty. According to the program Heads of Missions delivered speeches followed by the students' debate on "Death Penalty: pros and cons".

To make the discussion interesting and in preparing his opening remarks, South African Ambassador H.E. Shirish M. Soni, called up his old friend and colleague Mr. Robert Mc Bride for comments on the abolishment of the death penalty. Mr. Mc Bride was sentenced to death by the apartheid regime during an extremely repressive period of the South African struggle for freedom



INDABA is one of the largest tourism marketing events on the African calendar and one of the top three 'must visit' events of its kind on the global calendar which will be held from 7 to 9 May 2016. It showcases the widest variety of Southern Africa's best tourism products and attracts international buyers and media from across the world. INDABA has won the awards for Africa's best travel and tourism show. This award was presented by the Association of World Travel Awards.



Cape Town International Jazz Festival (CTIJF) is the largest music event in sub-Saharan Africa. The festival, now preparing for its 17th year. This proudly South African produced event is hosted at the Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC) each year on the last weekend of March or the first weekend of April. The festival annually boasts 5 stages with more than 40 artists performing over 2 nights. The programming - unique to the CTIJF is made up of a 50/50 split between South African artists and international artists respectively. The festival hosts in excess of 37, 000 music lovers over the 2 show days.



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ASTANA JANUARY 2015



and democracy and was spared from execution when a negotiated settlement was reached by all parties in South Africa. Mr. Mc Bride commented as follows... "and when it comes to the death penalty, proof of it's purported deterrent effect is still to be found. I have not met a death row inmate who at the time of the commission of the crime he/she was concerned about the possibility of being sentenced to death and executed".

Ambassador. S.M. Soni also indicated that Nelson Mandela and his colleagues were expecting the death penalty. He urged students and academics to read "Long Walk to Freedom" the autobiography of Nelson Mandela and to watch the movie produced by Mr. Anant Singh.

Blood Donation Day



Ambassador of the Republic of South Africa, H.E. Mr. Shirish M. Soni and Ambassador of Macedonia, H.E. Mr. Ilija Psalitrov



Ambassador S.M. Soni participated in the blood donation campaign arranged by the KAZGUU Academic Diplomatic Club, the Embassy of the Republic of Macedonia to the Republic of Kazakhstan, JSC "Administration for Service to the Diplomatic Corps" and Scientific and Production Centre of Transfusiology on 02 December 2015. The event "Blood Donor Day" followed the Day of the First President and the World Aids Day, both annually celebrated on 1 December, and it was conducted on the occasion of celebration of these days.

The donations by the Diplomatic Corps were an expression of its continued commitment to support the people and government of Kazakhstan, as well as to highlight the importance and continued need for blood worldwide and sensitize people about the importance of blood donation. 14 June is World Blood Donor Day.

2015 - The year of neutrality and peace.



The TAPI launch ceremony was led jointly by President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov of Turkmenistan, President Ashraf Ghani of Afghanistan, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif of Pakistan and Vice President Hamid Ansari of India

The Year of 2015 has been declared «The Year of Neutrality and Peace» by the decree of the Council of Elders of Turkmenistan. The adoption of a unique resolution by the United Nations General Assembly on 12 December 1995 has become the recognition of peaceful policy of Turkmenistan and its role as a country with ability to make a great contribution to pave a peaceful way for development of international relations.

Ambassador Shirish Soni visited Ashgabat to attend the International Conference "Policy of Neutrality: International Cooperation for Peace, Stability and Development" which was held on 12 December 2015.

Annual Christmas Charity Bazaar Held in Radisson Astana



The stall of South African Embassy in Astana on the Charity Bazaar 2015

The seventh Annual Christmas Charity Bazaar was held on 6 December 2015 at the Radisson Hotel. All proceeds from the bazaar went to helping underprivileged children in the capital.

The Annual Charity Bazaar is one of the capital's major fundraising events and involves the international and diplomatic communities from about 60 foreign embassies and diplomatic missions in Astana. In addition to its charity mission, the event is also an opportunity for Astana's Diplomatic Missions to showcase the culture, food and traditional and modern handicrafts from their home countries.

The South African Embassy in Astana sold South African wines and liquors which were all purchased in the first two hours due to high demand. The Embassy also sold unique handicraft from 9 African countries.

An event in honour of His Excellency Miguel Maury Buendia, the Apostolic Nuncio of the Holy See of the Vatican, who will be ending His Diplomatic Mission in the Republic of Kazakhstan at the end of December 2015



Ambassador S. M. Soni jointly with the Norwegian Embassy and the KazGUU hosted a farewell event for His Excellency Miguel Maury Buendia, Apostolic Nuncio of the Holy See of Vatican, on the occasion of the completion of his diplomatic mission in Kazakhstan. The event was arranged within the framework of the ADC, and it was attended by more than 40 ambassadors, diplomats and their spouses, as well as the KazGUU students.

Opening of the photo exhibition "UN: 70 Years in Pictures" and screening of a movie "Human" at KAZGUU



To mark the UN's 70th anniversary, a photo exhibition, entitled "70 Years of UN in Pictures", and a screening of the movie "Human" by Yann Arthus-Bertrand were held at the KAZGUU on 28 October 2015. The event was officially opened by Dr. Melita Vujnovic, WHO Representative and Head of the Country Office. The exhibition showcased compelling photographs that document the human stories behind the main areas of the UN's work, including education, employment, and gender equality. The film was first shown this year at the UN General Assembly in the presence of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. Arthus-Bertrand's film depicts his travels in the world, asking people about the meaning of life on earth and contains 2,000 interviews filmed in more than 60 countries around the world for two years. The events were carried out in collaboration with the



South Africa will be hosting the 35th „World Cup of Geosciences“ in 2016, the prestigious International Geological Congress (IGC), which is undoubtedly the most important activity of the International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS). The South African event will take place at the Cape Town International Convention Centre from 27 August to 4 September 2016.



Investing in African Mining Indaba is an annual professional conference dedicated to the capitalisation and development of mining interests in Africa.



SOUTH AFRICAN EMBASSY NEWSLETTER

ASTANA JANUARY 2015



United Nations office in Astana. KAZGUU students and staff, as well as Heads of Diplomatic Missions, diplomats and International Organizations attended the event.

During the photo exhibition Ambassador Shirish M.Soni was interviewed by the TAN TV Channel, where he had an opportunity to wish the people of the world well on the UN's Anniversary, and to inform about the South Africa's support and involvement in projects implemented by the United Nations.

Honouring ES Reddy, Order of the Companions of OR Tambo on his 90th birthday.



Mr. Enuga Sreenivasulu Reddy

Mr. Reddy who was awarded the Order of Companions of OR Tambo: Silver by President J.G. Zuma of the Republic of South Africa on 27 April, 2013, celebrated his 90th birthday. His activism and meticulous archival work is a great contribution to South African freedom. May he be blessed with long life and good health.

For the full article please visit: https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enuga_Sreenivasulu_Reddy

Marlene le Roux is appointed as CEO of the Artscape Theatre in Cape Town



CEO Ms. Marlene le Roux of the Artscape Theatre in Cape Town

Artscape Theatre in Cape Town has made history by appointing a woman as its new CEO. Marlene le Roux is also the first black person to be appointed to the position since its inception in 1971. Le Roux joined Artscape 14 years ago as Director of Audience Development and Education and has been acting as CEO for the past year. Her outreach projects have been described as legendary, taking complete productions to rural areas and communities. She has been globally recognised

and awarded by many countries for her projects where the arts have been used as a means for social cohesion and for promoting artists with disabilities.

The South African Embassy in Astana wishes Ms. Marelene le Roux success in all her future endeavours.

Masualle crowned best gender focused premier in Africa



Eastern Cape Premier Phumulo Masualle

Premier Phumulo Masualle has been crowned as the Best Gender Focused Governor/Premier in Africa at a continental awards ceremony.

Masualle beat fellow nominee, Ethiopian minister of foreign affairs, Dr Tedros Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, at the prestigious Leading Women of Africa Champions Awards for Men 2015.

The event hosted in the Durban City Hall, in KwaZulu-Natal by the Leading Women of Africa (LWA), saw more than three current and former head of states battle it out for the Most Gender Focused Head of State category.

The nominees were: former Mozambique president Armando Guebuza, the late Ethiopian minister Ato Meles and Senegal's president Macky Sall.

LWA chairwoman Ms. Madelein Mkunu visited Astana, Kazakhstan in 2013 and attended the Astana Economic Forum (AEF). She addressed the Business Women's Association of Kazakhstan during the AEF.

South Africa turns out world's best winemaker of the year



South Africa produced the world's best winemaker of 2015. Abrie Beeslaar, cellarmaster at Kanonkop

South Africa's renowned wine estate in Stellenbosch, has been crowned as the International Winemaker of the Year during the International Wine and Spirit Competition (IWSC) gala award ceremony in London. Beeslaar also won the title in 2008. The IWSC is the world's leading wine and spirits competition, with more than 5 500 products entered annually by some 50 countries.

Apart from the trophy for International Winemaker of the Year, Kanonkop was also named the South African Producer of the Year at this year's IWSC event, as well as the winner of the trophy for Best Pinotage for the Kanonkop Pinotage 2012.

South Africa voted top adventure destination for 2016



South Africa has been named the top adventure travel destination in the world for 2016, pipping hot contenders Costa Rica and the Galapagos Islands to the post in Virtuoso International Luxury Travel's annual rankings.

Virtuoso gives credit to southern Africa's rise as tourism destination by including South Africa on two of its most important lists in its 2016 Virtuoso Luxe Report, which named the top global destinations for 2016, along with other destination categories. The listings come at the same time that the Rainbow Nation country also slipped onto Virtuoso's list of top five luxury travel destinations for next year.

Virtuoso is considered the travel industry's leading luxury network consisting of both travel advisors and travel partners who specialize in creating travel itineraries you would not find online or plan yourself. The achievement follows the recent announcement that Botswana has topped Lonely Planet's Best in Travel 2016 list.



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ASTANA JANUARY 2015



CREATING THE COUNTRY WE WANT

December 30, 2014

By Maite Nkoana-Mashabane



Maite Nkoana-Mashabane, Minister of International Relations and Co-operation, reflects on South Africa's foreign policy in 2014.

This year has been a significant period for South Africa's foreign policy. Our government used the occasion of the celebration of 20 years of our democracy to consolidate ties with the international community, thanking those that contributed to our freedom and committing to continue playing a positive role towards a better Africa and world.

We entered the second phase of our transition from apartheid to a national democratic society this year as the government began a new term after the May elections by embarking on radical socio-economic transformation to push back the challenges of inequality, poverty and unemployment. Overcoming these challenges requires some far-reaching interventions and South Africa's foreign policy has a crucial role to play in terms of realising the goals of the second transition.

We moved forward into the next five years conscious that we have a solid National Development Plan (NDP) that seeks to guide our actions and set priorities for our international relations mandate aimed at creating the South Africa we want by 2030.

The NDP has laid the framework for our country to be a globally competitive economy and an influential and leading member of the international community. In terms of the NDP framework, South Africa must promote and contribute to sustainable development, democracy, the rule of law, human rights as well as peace and security within a safe, peaceful and prosperous southern African region and Africa, as well as a fair and just world.

This year we contributed to the NDP's 2030 vision through our bilateral and multilateral co-operation, as well as economic diplomacy. Our 126 missions abroad remain in the frontline of our efforts to realise the NDP objectives.

We have developed and maintained mutually beneficial economic relations with strategic partner countries and with the African continent. We have identified specific trade, manufacturing, infrastructure, industrial, as well as education and training niches.

We have supported regional integration efforts in our SADC neighbourhood, which is key to economic growth and intra-Africa trade. We hope to finalise the SADC-EAC-Comesa tripartite trade negotiations as they are an important step towards the realisation of the African Free Trade Area by 2017.

During this year, we also galvanised support for major infrastructure projects in our region, notably the Lesotho Highlands Water Project Phase II and the Grand Inga in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). We have also given dedicated attention to the North-South Corridor and other New Partnership for Africa's Development (Nepad)-driven infrastructure projects on the continent.

At this year's Southern African Development Community (SADC) Summit in Zimbabwe, South Africa was unanimously elected to chair the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Co-operation.

As chair, we led successful election observer missions to Mozambique, Botswana, Namibia and Mauritius, with elections in Zambia and Lesotho expected to take place early 2015. In Lesotho, South Africa's swift reaction and leadership role averted a potential crisis that could have had dire consequence for the political and security situation in the Kingdom and the region. South Africa remains seized with the situation in Lesotho as demonstrated by Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa's regular visits to Lesotho, where he is overseeing the implementation of SADC decisions as mandated by the regional body.

South Africa continued to play a leading role in efforts to bring peace and stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), working with other SADC member states and the Joint SADC-International Conference on the Great Lakes Region mechanism. Progress is being made with the M23 rebel group having been defeated militarily by the SADC Intervention Brigade. Also, the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda has been given strict deadlines this year by the two regional bodies to proceed with their voluntary disarmament, disintegration, reintegration and repatriation.

As a member of the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council, South Africa played an important role in the operationalisation of the African Peace and Security Architecture, which is a critical element in providing the AU with the necessary capacity to respond to our challenges of peace and security. The establishment of the African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises, championed by South Africa, is an interim mechanism to respond to emerging security situations, while the African Standby Force is being operationalised.

With Africa being central to our foreign policy, we have engaged in extensive consultations throughout the year with South African civil society, including Parliament, on the AU's Agenda 2063 under the theme: "The Africa we want". This vision, which is expected to be adopted at the January 2015 Summit of the AU, will outline the aspirations of African people across all sectors and the pledges of Africa's leaders. When the vision is adopted, member states will have to align their national policies with it through a process of domestication which, in our case, will entail harmonising Agenda 2063 with our NDP.

The AU's Agenda 2063, together with Nepad, and other socio-economic development programmes, will be the cornerstone and foundation of Africa's development agenda going forward.

South-South Co-operation is an important part of South Africa's foreign policy architecture and this year saw a number of important developments in terms of our membership to South-South such as Brics, IBSA, Focac and multilateral bodies such as NAM and the G77 plus China. Our network of bilateral relations with Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America and the Caribbean, have also contributed to enhance co-operation in trade, investment and other economic relations and the collaboration on global issues for a better world.

Within Brics, the New Development Bank has formally been established at this year's Brics Summit in Fortaleza, Brazil. The decision by the Brics leaders to task South Africa with the responsibility of serving as domicile for the Bank's Africa Regional Centre, not only raises the level of co-operation within Brics in addressing global challenges, but it is yet another indicator of South Africa's growing significance in driving the African agenda.

Another important landmark in our South-South relations is the fact that South Africa will be hosting the Forum on China-Africa Co-operation (Focac) next year. The upcoming Focac meeting will inject new impetus to the development of China-Africa relations and elevating the New Type of China-Africa Strategic Partnership to a higher level.

We have also strengthened our existing political and economic relations with Europe, including with the EU, our largest trade and investment partner. The conclusion of the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) negotiations between our region and the EU marks a major milestone in our evolving relations. We look forward to continue strengthening this relationship on the basis of the new agreement and working with our European partners to support our region's growth and development objectives.

South Africa's influence in multilateral organisations has been widely recognised this year. We have developed a strong voice for the reform of global governance in the Bretton Woods Institutions and the UN, and will continue to play an active role in all forms of multilateralism. Our membership to groupings such as the Group of 77 plus China, which South Africa will be chairing in 2015, are crucial for shaping and influencing the decision-making processes of the UN.

A distinguishing mark of South Africa's foreign policy is its commitment to upholding human rights. This was clearly demonstrated earlier this year when we voted in favour of a groundbreaking resolution on sexual orientation and gender identity at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva. As a member of this UN body for the period 2014 to 2016, we continue to take the lead in ensuring that the Council implements the commitments of the UN World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, which South Africa hosted in 2001.

During the course of the year, we were involved in two critical multilateral negotiations which will reach their conclusion during 2015. These are the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change on the basis of the Durban Plan for Enhanced Action; and the Post-2015 Development Agenda. We will continue to call for the acceleration of efforts and resources to ensure the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) up to next year and beyond.

International solidarity will continue to inspire our approach to world affairs. South Africa made a contribution of \$1 million towards humanitarian assistance to Palestinians through the United Nations Agency working in Palestine. South Africa's support for Palestinian statehood was reiterated during the recent state visit to South Africa by Palestine's President Mahmoud Abbas. Our country is an integral part of a continent on the rise. Our foreign policy must therefore move South Africa forward and make our vision of a better South Africa in a better Africa and a better world a reality.