

Remarks to welcome four new ambassadors to the country

Pretoria, Presidential Guest House, 25 January 2008

Ambassador designate of Kuwait

Welcome Ambassador.

Ambassador we need to focus on strengthening the relations between Kuwait and South Africa with a particular emphasis on the economic relations and opportunities that exist.

We must also continue to look at these matters including those in the Middle East. I am quite sure we will continue to work on these questions.

But welcome Ambassador

Ambassador designate of Brazil

Welcome Ambassador

As you know Ambassador, in order to prepare for the meeting of our soccer teams, we have borrowed one of your own to help us. He has assured us that Brazil will not be a problem. But I must say welcome Ambassador and we are very glad that you are here and we share the comments you have made. We share these sentiments absolutely.

Brazil is to South Africa more than a partner - more than a Strategic Partner - we have indeed a common commitment to what we must do. We have enormous potential in terms of looking absolutely at every element of relations between South Africa and Brazil and the work that we can and must do together.

I think the larger question for South Africa is the improvement of the relations - not just in terms of South Africa and Latin America but in terms of Africa and Latin America - this is a very important element in terms of our own priority and Brazil is a very important entry point to this sub-continent to develop that kind of relations. I am very pleased we had the first summit between Latin America and Africa at the end of 2006.

The further strengthening of IBSA is also a very important element of our relations.

We carry also the responsibility Ambassador, to strengthen our relations on a bilateral basis but also globally, the developing countries look to Brazil and South Africa to play a role in addressing the concerns of the entirety of the developing nations.

Welcome indeed Ambassador.

Ambassador designate of Madagascar

Ambassador welcome.

We are very glad to see you here because indeed your presence indicates the common resolve to strengthen relations between Madagascar and ourselves. As you would know, we have discussed this matter at some length with your President trying to identify various areas of co-operation and to see what it is we can do to speed up that process. Even now, we have agreed that we will have a meeting of our

own in Addis Ababa at the AU Summit. Indeed, Ambassador, we will rely on you to really give meat and flesh to this relationship. We are very close.

You would know Ambassador that during South Africa's struggle for liberation, one of the challenges the ANC faced was how to communicate with the population of South Africa and so, one of the things we did was to agree with the government of Madagascar who allowed us to broadcast from Madagascar to South Africa. As you know, the countries are very close.

So, this is an indication of the nature of the relations between Madagascar and South Africa so Ambassador, we must work at particularly these challenges of development that face both South Africa and Madagascar. If we pool our resources and capacities we will certainly be able to address these challenges and make progress.

South Africa also considers Madagascar a Strategic Partner.

Welcome Ambassador.

Ambassador designate of Iran

Ambassador thank you very much and thank you indeed for that message.

You know Ambassador, I owe your President a visit - I did promise him that I would visit, I am on my way Ambassador.

It is an important thing Ambassador because indeed, as you have indicated, the two countries and the two governments have for a long time now pointed to the need for Iran and South Africa to work together to strengthen these relations. We have looked with your President and other leaders of the Iranian people at various areas of co-operation that would benefit both countries and indeed, we are quite committed Ambassador to continue to work together on this matter of strengthening bilateral

The point you make also, Ambassador, is important, about the role of Iran in the region. Indeed, it places Iran as a very important player ! in that region - the Persian Gulf, the Middle East and so on, quite correctly.

So, it then emphasises the point Ambassador of the need for us to work closer together even in that context because as you know, South Africa has worked with Iranian government for quite some time, even on this controversial matter that arose around the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

We have always insisted, together with the government of Iran, that Iran like all other members and signatories of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty - there are rights and obligations in that Treaty one of which is the right to peaceful use of nuclear technology. This is a rule that applies to everybody and must indeed apply to everybody.

So, I am saying we have worked together on matters like that for a long time now as we must continue to work on all other matters - out of importance not just to Iran and South Africa but also to other countries - we can also make our own positive contribution.

But certainly Ambassador, let me promise you that we will work with you very closely while you are here. Let's discuss everything and anything and let us see what we can do together in the bilateral interest but also that would also help to improve the situation elsewhere in the world.

You are most welcome Ambassador.