basic education
Department:
Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Address by the Minister of Basic Education, H.E. Ms Angie Motshekga, at the Occasion of the Celebration of the Day of Independence of the Republic of Italy

02 JUNE 2023

Your Excellency, Mr Paolo Cuculi, Ambassador of the Republic of Italy in Pretoria

Ambassadors and High Commissioners

Members of the Diplomatic Corps

Members of the Italian Community in South Africa

Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of His Excellency President Cyril Ramaphosa, the Government, and the people of the Republic of South Africa, it is my utmost pleasure to extend our warmest greetings and heartfelt congratulations to the esteemed President, the esteemed Government,

the wonderful people of Italy, and the vibrant Italian diaspora on this joyous occasion.

We gather here today to celebrate the Independence Day of the Republic of Italy, a significant milestone representing the indomitable spirit and resilience of the Italian people.

We commemorate a significant milestone in Italian history and honour the enduring friendship between South Africa and Italy.

It is an occasion that allows us to reflect on the shared values, cultural ties, and the deepening partnership between our two nations.

The relationship between South Africa and Italy is founded on a shared dedication to freedom, democracy, and the pursuit of global progress.

Throughout the years, our nations have collaborated on various international issues, acknowledging the significance of collective efforts in tackling global challenges.

This shared vision has resulted in a robust and constructive bilateral relationship marked by mutual respect and cooperation.

A notable milestone in strengthening these ties was the successful visit of our Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, H.E. Dr Naledi Pandor, to Italy in late 2022.

The Italian community in South Africa, comprising an estimated 40,000 individuals, has played a vital role in strengthening the ties between our nations.

Their presence is a testament to the shared values and the profound connection between our governments, cultures, and democratic civilisations.

We acknowledge their contributions to our society and express gratitude for the vibrant cultural diversity they bring to our nation.

In the spirit of strengthening our partnership, we continue to explore opportunities for enhanced cooperation, particularly in the economic sphere.

While our bilateral trade levels have shown promise, we recognise the need to further improve and expand these economic ties.

We believe that sectors such as the Ocean Economy hold significant potential for collaboration, and Italy's expertise in the Green Energy field could greatly assist us in addressing our energy challenges.

To facilitate closer cooperation, our respective Embassies in Rome and Pretoria have been instrumental in fostering dialogue and coordination between our governments.

We have signed cooperation agreements in science, research and technology, defence, and arts and culture through these diplomatic channels.

The work conducted through these agreements aims to implement mutually beneficial projects and initiatives that promote the well-being and prosperity of the Italian and South African people.

We are pleased to announce that preparations are underway for the next South Africa-Italy Bilateral Consultations, which will be hosted in Italy.

This gathering will serve as an essential platform for further dialogue and collaboration as we seek to deepen our understanding and cooperation across various sectors.

We are eager to leverage this opportunity to strengthen the ties between our governments and explore new avenues for partnership.

Before I conclude, let us raise our glasses in a toast to President Sergio Mattarella and the people of Italy.

May their prosperity and good health be assured, and may the friendship between our two nations endure for many more years to come! Cin cin! (Cheers in Italian – pronounced Chin Chin).

In conclusion, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to President Cyril Ramaphosa, the Government of the Republic of South Africa, and all those involved in organising this celebration of Italy's Independence Day.

I extend my warmest gratitude to His Excellency, Mr Paolo Cuculi, the Ambassador of the Republic of Italy in Pretoria, for his continued efforts to strengthen the friendship bonds between our countries.

To the people of Italy, both at home and abroad, I wish you a joyous Independence Day celebration.

May this day remind you of your nation's remarkable journey towards freedom and prosperity!

Thank you, and once again,

I thank you.