

DRAFT REMARKS ON THE OCCASION OF THE NATIONAL DAY OF THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS, 5 OCTOBER 2012

Your Excellency, High Commissioner Petros Nacouzis, of the Republic of Cyprus to South Africa

Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of the Government and people of the Republic of South Africa, it is my pleasure to convey to the Government and people of the Republic of Cyprus our congratulations on the auspicious occasion of the Fifty-second Anniversary Celebrations of the Independence of Cyprus.

We are honoured to be able to celebrate this extraordinary day and its historic significance with the High Commission, the Government and people of Cyprus.

South Africa and Cyprus share many values, including a strong commitment to democracy, human rights, upholding of international law, open dialogue and mutual respect. It is upon these fundamental values that we base the constant strengthening of our relations to the benefit of our citizens and business communities. Cyprus strongly supports South Africa's efforts for the reform of the United Nations Security Council, and recommended on both occasions our election as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council.

The South African community of Cypriot origin form an important part of the wider South African national community, also within the context of the Hellenic Community in South Africa, and plays a meaningful role in the progressive and active Hellenic/Italian/Portuguese Alliance (HIP Alliance). Thousands of Cypriot citizens have for decades made South Africa their second homeland. They have settled here, established businesses thus contributing to the development of the South African economy.

Relations between our two countries are warm and close, and there is every possibility of deepening these even further, in the future.

Last year the Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Mr. Ebrahim Ebrahim paid a successful visit to Cyprus in order to further deepen the existing bilateral relations. In September this year Minister Nkoana-Mashabane also undertook a historic visit to Cyprus as the guest of her counterpart Dr. Erato Kozaukou-Markoullis. During this significant visit the Agreement on Bilateral Political Consultations was signed which will form the foundation on which cooperation between the two countries will, in future, be conducted. Several Agreements that will further cement our cooperation in a wide range of fields are still under consideration.

Your Excellency,

South Africa knows from its own experience that the achievement of peace and stability can be a painstaking process, requiring patience and perseverance. However, South Africa also knows the rewards that come with peace and national reconciliation. It is our dearest wish that a permanent solution to the division of the beautiful island of Cyprus will be found through the wise efforts of all parties concerned. We firmly support efforts led by the United Nations Secretary-General in facilitating a solution to the Cyprus Question.

Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen

I conclude by re-affirming the strong bonds of friendship and solidarity that exist between our countries and our peoples, and our shared commitment to further strengthen and deepen our relations.

I would like you to invite you to raise your glasses and join me in a toast to the good relations between South Africa and Cyprus, to the health of His Excellency President Demetris Christofias of the Republic of Cyprus and President Jacob Zuma of the Republic of South Africa and the prosperity of the people in our respective countries.

Thank you