

## **Joint Communiqué**

### **On the occasion of the Fourth South Africa-Ireland Partnership Forum**

**held in Dublin, 26 November 2015**

1. The fourth meeting of the South Africa-Ireland Partnership Forum was held in Dublin on 26 November 2015, co-chaired by Mr Seán Sherlock T.D., Minister of State for Development, Trade Promotion and North-South Co-operation of Ireland and Mr Luwellyn Landers M.P., Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of the Republic of South Africa. The Partnership Forum is the structured bilateral mechanism between South Africa and Ireland which was established in 2004.
2. The meeting reaffirmed the historical ties and close friendship that underpins the relationship between South Africa and Ireland. The parties had wide ranging discussions on political, economic and social developments in both countries, as well as developments in Africa, Europe and the wider world.
3. The Irish side recalled that President Michael D. Higgins paid a successful official working visit to South Africa in November 2014, building on Ireland's strong relationship with South Africa. President Higgins met with South African President Jacob Zuma during the visit, underpinning the high level ties between the two countries. The visit to South Africa of the Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Trade in July 2015 was also recalled. Both sides welcomed the fact that these strong historical links between Ireland and South Africa would be commemorated next year as part of the centenary of the 1916 Rising in Ireland.
4. The South African side highlighted the continued implementation of progressive policies and programmes, which include the National Development Plan-Vision 2030, and the Nine Point Plan to strengthen economic growth and create jobs.
5. The Irish side reaffirmed its ongoing commitment to development assistance in South Africa. This includes providing support to South Africa to address the challenges of HIV/AIDS, gender inequality and the impact of gender-based violence.
6. Both parties also welcomed work underway in the Irish Aid country programme aimed at improving employment and livelihood opportunities for South African citizens through building critical skills and capacities. This includes, amongst others, the Kader Asmal Fellowship Programme which aims to address continuing education needs in South Africa through the provision of one-year post-graduate programmes in Ireland.
7. The importance of strengthening and further developing trade and investment relations was emphasised. To this end, both sides expressed determination to continue to build on work in this area. Both parties also welcomed the successful Irish Trade Mission to South Africa in May 2015, led by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of Ireland, Mr Charles Flanagan T.D.
8. Both parties agreed on the importance of cooperation in the energy sector and of the potential to build further on existing contacts and experience. Other areas for potential

cooperation in the future, such as science and technology, education and tourism, were also considered.

9. The Irish side also highlighted the work of Business Ireland Southern Africa (BISA), a non-profit organisation initiated in 2011 for the purpose of promoting and assisting business interests and relationships between Southern Africa and Ireland. BISA chapters have been established in Johannesburg, Cape Town and Harare. The potential to replicate the BISA model in other regions is currently being explored by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Ireland.
10. The parties exchanged views on regional developments in Africa, welcoming efforts by the African Union and other regional organisations, including the Southern African Development Community (SADC), to promote peace, security and human rights throughout the continent and to facilitate the peaceful resolution of conflicts.
11. Minister Sherlock briefed Minister Landers on developments in Northern Ireland. Similarly, there was an exchange of views on recent political and economic developments in the European Union, including the challenges of migration and the refugee crisis.
12. The parties also discussed developments at a global level, including in international institutions and on human rights, acknowledging our shared commitment to nuclear disarmament and strong cooperation as members of the New Agenda Coalition (NAC) to achieve this goal.
13. Both parties renewed their commitment to the Partnership Forum at its conclusion as an excellent platform for dialogue and cooperation. As a commitment to our partnership, both parties agreed to elevate the Declaration of Intent signed in 2004 to a Memorandum of Understanding between the two countries that could be signed in the next Partnership Forum in 2017.