The Hon. Gerhardus Oosthuizen, Deputy Minister of Sport and Recreation and Ambassador Mninwa Mahlangu visited Los Angeles from 23 – 26 July 2015, to attend the Reception and Opening Ceremony of the Special Olympics. The Los Angeles Mission hosted the South African Athletes along with Council Members of the cities of Duarte, Glendora and Azusa to a traditional South African braai. Deputy Minister Oosthuizen gave his speech after the braai in which he celebrated the courage, skill and sportsmanship of the athletes as well as their hard work and diligence to come the distance to participate in the Special Olympics. Additionally, the Mission also hosted a private dinner in honour of the Deputy Minister on 24 July.

The cities of Duarte and Glendora along with the assistance of Azusa Pacific University, who availed its Trinity Hall dormitory for the use of South African Team, hosted 87 South Africans. They arranged an exciting program for the team; which included parades, fun activities and guided tours to interesting sights in the area.

The Opening Ceremony was held in the historic Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum, site of the 1932 and 1984 Olympic Games, and attracted some 80,000 spectators. It was a proud moment when the South African team, accompanied by the Deputy Minister, entered the stadium.

In all there were 6,500 athletes competing in a variety of sports which included football, bocce ball, table tennis and golf. The games held true to the importance of unity in the demonstration of the athletes from Cuba and Iran, at the opening Ceremony, carrying the torch for the last stretch before handing over to a US athlete to light the cauldron.
The Los Angeles Mission attended the 3rd Annual African Global Economic and Development Summit (AGED Summit) on 6-8 August. The Summit themed, “Closing the Gap on the Race Toward the Last Financial Frontier”, was filled with resources and opportunities for businesses, investors, governments and more. The former Consul-General, Mr. Cyril Ndaba, of the LA Mission worked alongside of the hosts of the event, Global Green Development Group, to expand the perspective and bring some new ideas and thought processes into view in terms of the involvement of the Regional Economic Communities of Africa. The Summit was held at the University of Southern California, USC; a perfect venue for cultivating the atmosphere for strategic alliances, smart partnerships and innovation to converge.

The Summit harnessed power packed sessions lead by experts in the fields of Agriculture, Aviation & Rail, Power Generation, Disaster Management and a host of other industries.

Innovative technology such as the Emergency Response Vehicle, which carries a patented filtration system that enables it to pump from any water source, clean the water and bring it to a healthy 10pH level, was represented at the Summit. People’s Community Clinic also displayed their Mobile Medical Unit which they use to assist patients with preventative care.

Among the experts were Mr. Tarek Youseff, Senior Political Officer from the African Union Mission to the US. Mr. Youseff gave an overview of “The Future we want for Africa: Agenda 2063” set forth by the African Union (AU). The African Union’s vision is to have “An Integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena.

The Mission used the opportunity to gather information for potential projects, as well as engage potential investors to meet the top priorities laid out in the 2015 State of the Nation given by H.E., President Jacob Zuma and the major focus areas of the Southern African Development Community (SADC).
The LA Mission has for years worked with both Solar Reserve and eSolar to invest in renewable energy projects in South Africa, and the allocation of the Photo Voltaic (PV) and Concentrated Solar Power (CSP) (The CSP system concentrates the sun’s energy using reflective devices, i.e. mirror panels or heliostats, to produce heat to be generated into electricity) contracts to Solar Reserve and the construction of heliostats by eSolar in South Africa, are indeed good news for the LA Mission.

Solar Reserve, the Project Developer in South Africa, has designated an EPC (Engineering Procurement and Construction) company to contract with eSolar to manufacture, assemble and install 500,000 heliostats at a cost of $150 million for their CSP project in Postmasburg, and Acting Consul-General Johan Klopper met on 28 July with senior eSolar officials to discuss how the LA Mission can assist in bringing this contract to fruition.

The LA Mission and the dti are assisting eSolar to identify suitable industrial buildings, suppliers of steel, associated power and communications equipment, computers, servers, cables and data transmission equipment to ensure the plant would be up and running in early 2016.
In honor of the former president, Nelson Mandela, the Los Angeles Mission volunteered at Baby2Baby, Inc. for the International Mandela Day of Service. Baby2Baby serves low-income families in the Los Angeles area and serves one of the most vulnerable populations in the world, i.e. children. Poverty, underserved cultural populations, disrupted families and homelessness are some of the indicators which make up the most vulnerable communities in the Los Angeles area. Baby2Baby has served over 100,000 children thus far in 2015.

On the day of service, the Mission assisted at the Baby2Baby Warehouse with the folding, sorting and packaging of slightly used clothing. Staff also separated toys from books and other baby accessories. The staff wore Nelson Mandela t-shirts and shirts that represented South Africa well. Alongside of about 50 volunteers from local schools, returning volunteers of all ages and supporters; the Mission staff separated slightly used items from those that could be donated to Goodwill (A local thrift store where clothes can be purchased for minimal cost). Mission staff were also given the name, age and gender of individual children to prepare special gift bags.

Preparing a gift bag for a special child made the volunteer experience much more personable.

“IT IS IN YOUR HANDS TO CREATE A BETTER WORLD FOR ALL WHO LIVE IN IT”

*Nelson Mandela*
South African Business Women

With the African Union’s declaration of the year 2015 as the “Year of Women’s Empowerment and Development”, the LA mission showed its support for the development and empowerment of women by hosting, on September 19, a “Women in Business” working luncheon with the South African Association of Business Communities (SAABC) for South African professional women in northern California.

The event was attended by around forty compelling women from a wide variety of professions including: biopharmaceutical, hi-tech, law, executive coaching, investment banking, interior design, venture-capital, healthcare/medical, e-commerce, social entrepreneurship, media and communications, beauty, real-estate, marketing, hospitality, food and beverage, government, medical research, human resources—and more.

Jacqui Buchanan, a global communications strategist and US partner in the SA skincare company Katavi Botanicals, said in her presentation that, “We are immensely grateful for the ongoing support of South Africa’s LA mission in our efforts to showcase South African talent in the global arena.”

“For years we have hosted business networking events where the majority of attendees have been men, the women stay at home, yet we knew there’s a remarkable caliber of professional South African women working across the San Francisco Bay Area. Hearing the astounding stories at the luncheon of what other South African women have achieved internationally was superbly inspiring,” Guest speakers, including Deidre Luzmore, CEO of MzansiStore; Dr Aurelia Williams, a PhD BioChemistry researcher; Michelle Bodley, a Real-Estate Agent with multi-million dollar sales; Amanda Ellison, a consultant and executive coach to CEO’s and Jacqui Buchanan, shared their scintillating journeys to success and discussed topics such as gender stereotypes, obstacles to growing women-owned companies and a lack of female representation in top tier business.
Cape Coast Wine Safari

More than twenty wine writers, restaurant sommeliers and wine buyers converged the evening of October 5 at the Upstairs 2 Restaurant for a special wine safari featuring the six wine routes of Elgin, Walker Bay, Bot Rivier, Hemel en Aarde, Elim and Swellendam in the Cape South Coast.

The Consul, Mr Johan Klopper welcomed the elite group of wine experts for an evening featuring the tourism highlights and the natural “terroir” that makes wine production in the Cape South Coast region special.

Wines of South Africa Marketing Manager, Jim Clarke masterfully led the group through the various regions explaining the history of the wine makers, the grape varietals grown in these areas and the new group of young winemakers emerging from these regions.

World traveller Elizabeth Kate, presented the American perspective that makes South Africa, “one of the places in the world to include in your bucket list”, by highlighting the special tourist offerings to experience while going through these wine routes.

There were seventeen wines from these six regions poured complementing the artfully designed four-course dinner prepared by restaurant owner Chef Todd, famous for participating in the “Chopped!” television series.

Carole Solomon of Heritage Link Brands and Jerry Spivack of Southern Starz, both South African wine importers, informed Consul Klopper that they had productive discussions with Ron Pascual, wine buyer for major grocery chain Whole Foods, while Wines of South Africa Jim Clarke engaged Senior Correspondent for Wines and Spirits, Patrick Comiskey, and Covell Sommelier Matthew Kaner on the range of wines featured for the evening.