

## **BILATERAL RELATIONS BETWEEN SOUTH AFRICA AND MADAGASCAR**

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Malagasy people have their origin in Africa, Asia and other continents. Madagascar and her people form an integral part of the South African history. Over the centuries thousands of Malagasy people were shipped to Cape Town by the Dutch and others, as slaves. The majority of them are today the forebears of South Africans all over the country. There is a moving and heroic true story of Malagasy slaves who bravely mutinied against the Dutch crew of a Dutch slave ship "Die Meermin" on its way to Cape Town during the heydays of the slave trade.

Also during the long struggle against apartheid and racial discrimination, Malagasy people hosted and supported South African liberation movements, who were officially represented in Madagascar, inter alia, by making the Malagasy public broadcasting facilities available to them in their fight against Apartheid. Radio Freedom was operated by South African freedom fighters in Madagascar between 1979 and 1993. South Africa remains eternally grateful to the Malagasy for this selfless commitment to the struggle against apartheid and the liberation of her people.

The Malagasy music and dance of the South are similar to SA's especially in areas like Kwa-Zulu Natal and the Eastern Cape. The dance you find in the Antananarivo/Highlands region is similar to the ones done by the coloureds in Western Cape during their annual carnival. So you can include Western Cape as well. It is appropriate that SA and Madagascar jointly work together in the fields of arts and culture. Arts and culture present huge benefits for people by their contribution to socio-economic development of a nation.

Diplomatic relations between South Africa and Madagascar were established in 1994. The two countries have signed a number of bilateral agreements, namely; Bilateral Air Transport Agreement (1990); Agreement on Merchant Shipping and Related Maritime Matters (1990); Agreement on Exchange of Representatives, their Privileges and Diplomatic Immunities (1991); Exchange of Notes to Establish Diplomatic Relations (1994); Cooperation Agreement between the City of Antananarivo and the City of Tshwane (1996); Exchange of Notes on work for spouses of diplomatic officials (2006); Bilateral Air Services Agreement (2005 amended in 2007); and the Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement (2006). A Science and Technology Agreement was signed in October 2015. In this regard, Madagascar is part of the group of African and Indian Ocean countries, in partnership with SA in developing the SKA project which is a ground breaking project for the whole world.

In 2017 following a Madagascar Investment Conference held at the headquarters of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation, a Declaration of Intent document was signed wherein the key economic sectors to for bilateral cooperation were outlined.