

## **The Mission in Spain celebrates 2017 Nelson Mandela International Day**

Once more the Mission in Madrid hosted highly successful Nelson Mandela Day events being mainly (a) Nelson Mandela Marathon on 16 July, (b) Performance of the Mahotella Queens in Madrid on as part of the annual Veranos de la Villa summer cultural festival, (c) Official unveiling of an artistic mural in Lavapiés, Madrid on the legacy of Former President Mandela and handing-over on 18 July of food parcels from *El Corte Ingles* department store to two NGOs in Madrid.

The Mission was honoured by the presence of Honorable Minister Nathi Mthethwa who officiated all the events and also participated as the Mission's Special Guest of Honour. This year in Madrid marked the first edition of the Nelson Mandela 10K Marathon where around 550 runners from across the region of Madrid participated in this event that was held from 20h00-22h00 on 16 July 2017. Minister Mthethwa and Ambassador Ngonyama officially started the race and also presided over the prize giving ceremony at the end of the race. The marathon was followed by a highly attended two-hour concert where the famous Mohotella Queens entertained a crowd of around 1500 spectators.

On 18 July 2017, Minister Mthethwa and Ambassador Ngonyama, along with Councilor Jorge García Castaño from the Madrid Central District, unveiled an artistic mural designed by Mr Buntu Fihla, a young South African visual artist, on the legacy of Former President Nelson Mandela. The mural is inspired by the famous Madiba shirt. On the same day the Embassy also handed over 590kg of food parcels from *El Corte Ingles* department store to two major NGOs that are based in Madrid, being ACUDEVA and FACIAM. ACUDEVA (Cultural Association in Defence of African Values) helps disadvantaged African immigrants arriving in Spain and offers them with social aid, training programmes, legal aid, employment services as well as assistance with paperwork. FACIAM has a network of eight centers in Madrid that provide shelter to 570 homeless people every night and feeds 603 people daily. All the above events were coordinated in collaboration with the City of Madrid. The Marathon received sponsorship from private companies such as Acerinox (metals), Indurken (pharmaceuticals and chemical products), MoneyGram (financial services) and Gas Natural (energy and mining).

The Mission also wishes to thank the SA Department of Arts and Culture and the Madrid City Council for supporting the Nelson Mandela Mural project. Further word of gratitude is extended to *El Corte Ingles* for providing the 590 kg foods parcels that were distributed this year. These events provided an excellent platform for South Africa to profile its positive image in Spain. The events were also highly covered by the Spanish media, which have an extensive reach to North and South America as well as to related African countries.