



Spanish National Day Celebrations

The Department of Small Business Development (DSBD) together with its agencies Small Enterprise Development Agency (Seda) and Small Enterprise Finance Agency (sefa) led by the Minister for Small Business Development Stella Ndabeni-Abrahams (SBD) in collaboration with the Spanish Embassy participated in the Spanish Day commemoration which was held on 13 October 2023 in Waterkloof. The Spanish Embassy commemorated 531 years of the National Day known as the Día de la Hispanidad. The day celebrates legendary Spanish explorer, Christopher Columbus' arrival in the America from Spain. The magnificent Spanish Embassy in Pretoria played host to the event.

Spain Hispanic Day is celebrated in October 12 in each year to mark Christopher Columbus' first landfall in America. Columbus was seeking a direct route to Asia when he discovered the Americas. Spain Hispanic Day, also known

as Fiesta Nacional de España or Día de la Hispanidad, is an official holiday in most Hispanic America under different names. All government administrative buildings and offices, banks, and stores are closed for the day. The day focused on the Spanish identity, heritage and the bond between the old European country and Spanish-speaking Latin America.

The Ministry of Small Business Development was established in 2014 marking a turning point in the history of SMMEs and Co-operatives development in South Africa, to lead and coordinate an integrated approach to the promotion and development of entrepreneurship, Small, Micro and Medium Enterprises (SMMEs) and Co-operatives, and to ensure an enabling legislative and policy environment to support their growth and sustainability.



The National Spanish day commemoration was held in Pretoria in the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality where 100 stakeholders from across the province attended the event.

The 2023 commemoration was aimed at celebrating the country's heritage. The day is an homage to over 400 million people across continents united by a common language, history, and culture. The quintessential Spanish lifestyle is fully displayed in their concerts, street shows, dance, people in regional costumes and excellent food and wine. The National Day of has faced many changes throughout the 20th century, but many still regard it as one of the most important days in Spanish history.

The DSBD has identified a few activities on the programmatic approach to the commemoration of the Spanish Day. Most of the activities will be implemented in collaboration with strategic

partners within the SMME and Cooperatives sectors as well as the broader gender and women equality ecosystems. This will not only ensure leveraging on the experience and expertise from the stakeholders but will also enable the DSBD to reach out to a broader constituency by leveraging on the resources and the networks of the fellow partners.

In celebration of this historic day Minister for Small Business Development, Stella Ndabeni-Abrahams delivered a message of support at the National Spanish day celebrations.

"On behalf of President Cyril Ramaphosa, the government and people of the Republic of South Africa, I wish to extend our warmest greetings and heartfelt congratulations to His Majesty King Felipe VI and the Government and the People of the Kingdom of Spain, on the celebration of the Kingdom of Spain's National Day," said Minister Ndabeni-Abrahams.



Minister Ndabeni-Abrahams reiterated that relations between South Africa and Spain have strengthened over the years and continue to evolve with increasing multilateral and bilateral cooperation across several sectors, including Renewable Energy; Science and Technology; Sport; and Higher Education. "We also appreciate the Spanish government's offer on possible solutions to our energy crisis, including the provision of 2.11 billion Euros for Spanish companies to invest in renewable energy and climate-related projects in South Africa in the next 5 years," added Minister Ndabeni-Abrahams.

Minister Ndabeni-Abrahams went on to say "There is a significant presence of Spanish businesses in South Africa, creating numerous job opportunities for South Africans. We value the emphasis shown by Spanish companies in employing and training South Africans and are encouraged by Spain's willingness to cooperate

on higher education and training of young South Africans."

South Africa and Spain also cooperate in various multilateral institutions, and often agree on mutual support for our respective candidates. South Africa, as the current Chair of the BRICS Group, aims to also engage with Spain, as the current President of the European Union, on working together to uphold the principles of the United Nations Charter and a rules-based international order. "On behalf of South Africa, I wish to reiterate our commitment to continue strengthening the important and historic partnership between our respective countries and our peoples, and we look forward to another year of friendship, prosperity, and mutual exchange between our two nations." Minister Ndabeni-Abrahams emphasized.

Mr. Raimundo Robredo, Ambassador at the Spanish Embassy delivered the keynote address to sum up the events of the day.

“This day is originally celebrated by the Spanish speaking people (Hispanics) in America following Columbus’s arrival and has been recognised by the Spanish in the mainland and now part of their heritage since 1492. Christopher Columbus discovery of the Americas significantly changed the continent and Europe making Spain the modern superpower and shaping the Americas ethnic, cultural, and political landscapes. Columbus first voyage to the New World began on the evening of August 3, 1492,” said Ambassador Robredo.

“The Embassy of Spain in Pretoria is pleased to inform that the Women for Africa Foundation has just launched the annual call for its Learn Africa Canarias 2023-24 online scholarship program with the sponsorship of the Ministry of Economy, Knowledge, and Employment of the Government of the Canary Islands,” added Ambassador Robredo.

“Since its launch in 2020, 670 women from 44 African countries have been able to enroll in one or more of the online courses assigned to the 900 scholarships offered under the program to date. This year’s call is characterized by the variety of subjects in which the courses are framed, such as renewable energies, new technologies, infectious diseases, tourism and women, economy, entrepreneurship, or international relations, among others, and by the emphasis on the Spanish language,” Ambassador Robredo elaborated.

Ambassador Robredo stated that “The call includes specialised short courses, Spanish courses and university courses designed by the Universities of las Palmas de Gran Canaria (ULPGC) and La Laguna (ULL) and their foundations, Fundación Universitaria de Las Palmas (FULP) and Fundación General de la Universidad de La Laguna (FGULL), as well as by the Instituto Tecnológico de Canarias (ITC).”

The Small Business Business Development Portfolio used the National Spanish day celebrations to promote programmes and offerings of the Portfolio through exhibitions. Amongst the programmes that were promoted during the exhibitions included the Youth Challenge Fund (YCF) which is a youth start-up support programme intended to stimulate the establishment and growth of youth-owned businesses, the SheTradesZA that aimed to improve access to markets and investment opportunities for women-owned enterprises and promote business opportunities as well as the Township and Rural Entrepreneurship Programme (TREP) which aims to improve the quality and competitiveness of small enterprises in townships and rural areas.

