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MEDIA STATEMENT

SOUTH AFRICA AND THE UNITED KINGDOM CEMENT PARTNERSHIP ON INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

Public Works and Infrastructure Minister Sihle Zikalala, together with United Kingdom Trade Envoy Andrew Selous MP, today cemented relations that will see the two countries share experience, expertise and best practices in the prioritisation, financing, procurement and management of infrastructure projects.

The UK Trade Envoy and his delegation met with Minister Zikalala and her Deputy Bernice Swarts, to cement the already existing partnerships that will see the two countries ramp up infrastructure development trade relations.

The renewal and consolidation of these trade relations which are detailed in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed between the two countries, will contribute in improving South Africa's capacity to deliver infrastructure projects and to attract investments.

The partnership will see a stronger collaboration between Infrastructure South Africa (ISA), a programme under the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure, which packages, plans and manages the delivery of Infrastructure for the country, as well as the UK Infrastructure and Projects Authority (IPA), which executes infrastructure projects on behalf of the UK government. Under the MOU, the United Kingdom will support infrastructure projects in South Africa, and facilitate the necessary financial and technical capacity.

Welcoming the partnership, Minister Zikalala emphasized that infrastructure delivery is a critical component of South Africa's economic reconstruction and recovery programme. "Our government has placed infrastructure as key to the development and re-igniting of our economy. We value investing in infrastructure projects as they have a multiplier effect and beneficiation in the whole economic value-chain, especially job creation. We consider infrastructure as the backbone of our economy," said Minister Zikalala.

Minister Zikalala highlighted areas such as energy, hydrogen and water, especially the construction of dams, transport especially logistics, and road-to-rail initiatives as well

as the construction of bridges, as urgent areas of intervention that should benefit from the partnership.

The UK Envoy also expressed delight at the renewal of the good relations, and committed that the UK bridge company would form part of the delegation from the United Kingdom that would be visiting South Africa and tour projects under construction.

Both the delegations agreed that it was time to breathe life into the MOU, and that “it is time for delivery, getting the spade to the ground, and less talk”.

The UK and South Africa have a deep and longstanding economic partnership. South Africa remains an important trading partner for the UK, with bilateral trade between the UK and South Africa reaching £11.0 (ZAR values) billion in the four quarters to the end of Q3 2021, an increase of 35.5%. South Africa was also the largest trading partner in Africa, accounting for 34.9% of all trade.

The UK has reaffirmed its commitment to support the South African Government’s infrastructure agenda, and to leverage UK expertise and innovation to facilitate the sharing of technical knowledge, advice, skills and expertise across the infrastructure sector.

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