



**JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ
AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE OFFICIAL DISCUSSIONS
OF THE STATE VISIT OF HIS EXCELLENCY FRENCH
PRESIDENT EMMANUEL MACRON
TO SOUTH AFRICA**

1. Today, Friday 28 May 2021, HE President Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa hosted HE President Emmanuel Macron of the French Republic for a State Visit. This was President Macron's first visit to South Africa. The State Visit takes place shortly after President Ramaphosa's Working Visit to France to attend and participate in the Summit on Financing of African Economies.
2. South Africa and France are strategic partners with strong cooperation at national, regional and multilateral levels.
3. Relations between the two countries are underpinned by a robust bilateral cooperation programme encompassing areas such as Political Dialogue, Defence, Science and Technology, Energy, Education, Transport, Arts and Culture, among others.
4. The Presidents expressed their satisfaction at the growing and expanding cooperation between the two countries. They welcomed the elevation of the Forum for Political Dialogue to a Joint Ministerial Commission (JMC) that will be co-chaired by the two Ministers of Foreign Affairs. Accordingly, the JMC will meet biennially in order to assess the existing cooperation and further deepen political dialogue between the two countries.
5. The Presidents also exchanged views on Covid-19 and its devastating impact which has resulted in the social, health and economic crisis. They both agreed that the pandemic has unleashed a global economic downturn only experienced during the 1930s depression and is putting enormous pressure on the public health systems, destroying the livelihoods of many families and severely limiting many countries economic growth prospects. The Presidents noted that the impact of the pandemic has been particularly acute in Africa.
6. President Macron congratulated President Ramaphosa in his capacity as Chair of the African Union in 2020 and current AU Covid-19 Champion for his leadership in coordinating the continent-wide Covid-19 response

plan which entails the development of the Africa medical supply platform which assists all AU Member States to secure the much needed supplies

7. The two Presidents underscored that access to vaccines is key to the fight against Covid-19. The two Presidents agreed on the importance of increasing vaccine production capacities worldwide and in particular in Africa. President Ramaphosa commended the initiative announced by international partners, including France, to support the expansion of vaccine production capacities in South Africa and in Africa.
9. The two Presidents discussed South Africa and India's proposal at the WTO to suspend certain intellectual property rights (IP) related to Covid-19 provisions in order to ensure wider access to vaccines. The Presidents agreed to continue to take forward a commitment to make the knowledge related to health technologies and products that are needed to address the Covid-19 pandemic a Global Public Good. They have agreed to continue working jointly towards the collaboration aimed at expanding research, innovation and production beyond Covid-19 in South Africa and Africa, in order to fully deliver public health security on the Continent.
10. The Presidents reaffirmed the importance and strength of the bilateral trade and investments between the two countries. They agreed to working together to pursue balanced and growing trade and to promote investment that supports industrial development. The work that is done in the Joint Economic Commission (JEC) and between South African business interests and Business France in South Africa to this effect will continue. President Ramaphosa commended the investments pledged by French companies in South Africa during the Investment Conferences held in 2019 and 2020, and their commitment to supporting vocational training and skills development.
11. Both countries agreed to consult, as needed, in the upcoming review of the EU-SADC Partnership Agreement, while France offered its support to the integration and structural transformation objectives of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA).
12. Both countries agreed to strengthen their cooperation in the Indian Ocean in the fields of science, preservation of biodiversity and blue economy, particularly in the framework of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), which France joined in 2020 on account of the Island of Reunion.
13. Both sides recognised the crucial importance of building businesses and entrepreneurs and providing education and skills development for the future. A Science and Innovation Cooperation Agreement to this effect has been signed. South Africa welcomed the recent unanimous decision by the Council of the Square Kilometre Array (SKA) Observatory, the intergovernmental organisation governing the global SKA radio telescope project, to accept France as member. South Africa and France look

forward to enhanced bilateral cooperation in support of the SKA project, and its related fields of research and development.

14. The Presidents acknowledged and recognised that the climate change threat, the loss of biological diversity and other global environmental challenges must be addressed within the context of sustainable development and supporting green, sustainable energy recovery policies and technologies. In this regard, President Macron recalled that France was ready to accompany the just energy transition in South Africa, including through dedicated support to Eskom.
15. South Africa and France are fully committed to the progressive development of a multilateral response to global environmental challenges, based on equity and science and on the established principles set out in the UNFCCC.
16. Both countries strongly committed themselves to the preservation and strengthening of the rules-based Multilateral System and agreed to increase cooperation at the G20, where addressing regional debt sustainability was a shared priority.
17. South Africa and France are strongly committed to improving the condition of women around the world and are working together to ensure the success of the Generation Equality Forum, organized by UN Women, which will be held in France between June 30 and July 2, 2021 and for which South Africa will play a crucial role.
18. The two Presidents exchanged views on the major international crises and renewed their commitment to work in close coordination to tackle the main crises in Africa and the Middle East.
19. South Africa and France re-affirmed the bonds of friendship and solidarity that exist between the two countries and look forward to continued engagement that would benefit their peoples, countries and respective regions and the world.