

## **FREEDOM DAY CELEBRATIONS: BUSINESS SEMINAR IN BELO HORIZONTE,**

**20 APRIL 2017**

On the 20<sup>th</sup> of April 2017, the South African Embassy in Brasilia marked South Africa's 23<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of the attainment of democracy and freedom in Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais, a state in the south-east of Brazil.

The hosting of Freedom Day celebrations in Minas Gerais was a deliberate break with the tradition of having all major celebrations in the capital city Brasilia. To advance economic diplomacy, the celebration took a form of a business seminar during which trade and investment opportunities as well as tourism to South Africa were promoted.

In his opening address to the business seminar to mark the national day celebrations, Ambassador Mashimbye spoke about the relations between Brazil and South Africa at the bilateral, inter-regional and global levels

With reference to Brazil as a strategic partner, Ambassador Mashimbye said:

“It is the reason we are here today. Brazil has more than 205 million citizens, compared to South Africa's 55 million. Brazil has an enormous internal market compared to South Africa, but South Africa has the most sophisticated economy on the African continent and is a gateway to a market of one billion people through the Tripartite Free Trade Area Agreement and the envisaged Continental Free Trade Agreement to be launched this year.

The trade balance between our countries is very much in favour of Brazil. Brazil exported US\$ 1.4 billion worth of goods to South Africa in 2016, while South Africa exported US\$ 336 million worth of goods to Brazil in 2016.

South African companies have invested in Brazil over the past years including Anglo Gold Ashanti here in Minas Gerais. However Brazilian companies have been slow to invest in South Africa. We hope to use this opportunity to share with you the opportunities for investment in South Africa and we want to tell you about the products that we believe we can bring into the Brazilian market.”

As he concluded his remarks, Ambassador Mashimbye proposed the establishment of South Africa-Brazil business forum to foster business ties and to enable business leaders to identify new opportunities ....”

Ms Shanaaz Ebrahim, Consul (Economic) based at the South African Consulate-General in São Paulo made a presentation on South Africa as the trading partner and investment destination of choice.

The business seminar was followed by a three-course lunch for the participants during which they enjoyed South African wines.