

Joint Communiqué

Bilateral Meeting between Minister Trevor Manuel, Minister of Finance: South Africa and Minister Timothy Thahane, Minister of Finance and Development Planning: Lesotho

The Ministers and their senior officials met in Pretoria today to foster a closer working relationship between the two countries. The Ministers acknowledged that although the two economies differ vastly in relation to their GDP per capita, they are inextricably linked, hence the need to collaborate closely for the realisation of economic growth and poverty reduction.

Agreement was reached pertaining to the importance of a closer working relationship between the revenue agencies. The agencies will be encouraged to ensure more effective and efficient border control. The sharing of information between the respective customs and relevant officials would be strengthened through synergy and automation of cross border systems.

The Ministers agreed to cooperate on and strengthen measures to counter money laundering in compliance with international standards. Closer coordination of the banking sectors, with specific emphasis on an electronic payment clearance system would be fostered.

The meeting agreed to encourage closer cooperation in order to facilitate investment and trade between South Africa and Lesotho. This could be facilitated through joint research and analysis in relevant sectors.

The areas identified for closer cooperation include fiscal decentralisation, co-ordination on budget and fiscal analysis and public private partnerships, which will be discussed in more detail between the relevant technical experts. A plan of action including capacity building will be developed and submitted to the Economic Cluster of the Joint Bilateral Coordination Commission (JBCC) for perusal and support.

Feedback on progress made will be given at the next senior official meeting of the JBCC later this year. The Ministers also agreed to regular meetings to monitor progress.

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