

Powwow on higher education

THE UK Minister for the Cabinet and Paymaster General Matt Hancock was part of a delegation to South Africa for Going Global held in Cape Town last Tuesday.

This annual event, hosted by the British Council, provides a forum for leaders to debate higher education issues. Previous ones were held in the Middle East, the Americas and in the UK.

It was its first time in Africa.

Hancock, whose responsibilities include public sector efficiency and reform, digital transformation of government and government transparency, highlighted the UK's contribution to collaboration and innovation in international education.

The UK is a world leader on open data and remains at the forefront of a global transparency revolution and will host the international Anti-Corruption Summit on Thursday.

This summit, the first of its kind, brings together world leaders, business and civil society to agree to steps to expose corruption, punish perpetrators and support those affected.

In attendance was the Minister for Higher Education and Training, Dr Blade Nzimande, policy makers, vice-chancellors and heads of other institutions.

Another initiative between South Africa and the UK saw the naming of the latest beneficiaries of the bilateral research chair initiative.

The initiative which started in 2006 has grown to 198 chairs and is now worth more than R400 million a year. The research chair is a joint initiative with the National Research Foundation implemented through the British Council, and focuses on established scientists undertaking frontier research.

The main bilateral science and innovation programme between South Africa and the UK is the Newton Fund launched in 2014.

Activities focus on public health, environment and food security, science and technology capacity building. Taking up three chairs were Dr Stephen Devereux, research chair in food security at UWC, Professor Michael John Roberts, research chair in food security at Nelson Mandela University and Professor Lawrence Hamilton, research chair in political theory at Wits.

DIPLOMATIC SCENE

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Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Senzeni Zokwana is surrounded by members of the EU delegation to South Africa.

PICTURE: OUPA MOKOENA

66 years and counting for unity in Europe

SAKHILE NDLAZI

IT WAS an auspicious day of celebration at the Pretoria National Botanical Gardens yesterday as the delegation of the EU to South Africa celebrated their 66th anniversary.

The event marked the day in 1950 when Robert Schuman, one of the founders of the EU, made his "Schuman Declaration", outlining a vision to unite separate European states into a single community.

EU ambassador to SA Marcus Cornaro said the day should be a reminder of Schuman's vision to unite Europe, rebounding from the

devastation of World War II.

Sharing Cornaro's sentiments was SA's Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Senzeni Zokwana who said the unique EU integration model remained an inspiration to many regions of the world, including the African continent. He also praised Schuman's style of leadership, adding that leaders around the world could learn from it.

"His leadership demonstrated first and foremost that planting the seed of unity, solidarity and peace would later become the vision that the EU would see occupy its rightful place in the global affairs and

would provide the basis of peace," Zokwana said.

Members of the EU delegation including Germany, the UK and the Netherlands also acknowledged their solid bilateral relationship with SA under the theme SA-EU Partnership: Skills and Markets for Sustainable Jobs which is in line with the National Development Plan (2030).

The SA-EU relationship is underpinned by the Trade, Development and Co-operation Agreement (TDCA) signed in 1999 and which forms the legal basis of the partnership. The TDCA was an important stepping

stone for the establishment of the SA-EU Strategic Partnership, which is only one of 10 in the world and the adoption of the Joint Action Plan in May 2007.

Zokwana said SA continues its engagements with the EU as a bloc, which is SA's largest trading partner and foreign investor. "Over 2000 EU companies operate within South Africa creating over 350 000 jobs." Furthermore, the European Investment Bank has also been playing an important role in supporting SA national priorities. Since 1995, the bank has provided over R4 billion in loans to SA borrowers.

Chinese professorship for SA envoy

SOUTH African diplomat Dr Anil Sooklal has been honoured with an Adjunct Professorship in Fujian, China.

The Fujian Agriculture and Forestry University (Fafu) Faculty of Law and Humanities conferred the honour on Sooklal, deputy director-general for Asia and the Middle East.

Sooklal has had a long-standing association with China spanning more than 30 years.

This relationship has included both his undergraduate and post-graduate studies in Chinese history, culture and philosophy, which continued through his academic tenure at Unisa and Durban Westville (KwaZulu-Natal) which focused on Oriental Studies.

Since joining the government the major part of Sooklal's responsibilities have been focused on Asia and the Middle East including oversee-

ing this country's relations with China.

The president of the university, Professor LAN Siren, described Sooklal as a visionary diplomat in the Dirco, and said his contributions to the friendship between both countries have long been acknowledged by both governments.

At the induction ceremony held on May 4 at the university, Sooklal delivered a keynote address titled "China-South Africa Relations: A Win-Win Partnership".

The lecture was attended by more than 250 students, academics and members of the local government authorities.

He also held discussions with the university authorities in further strengthening ties, including enhancing collaborative programmes between Fafu and higher education institutions and think tanks in South Africa. - Staff Reporter

SA and Ghana strengthen ties

INTERNATIONAL Relations Minister Maite Nkoana-Mashabane last week led a delegation to Accra, Ghana, for the 4th Session of the South Africa-Ghana Permanent Joint Commission for Co-operation.

The joint commission aims at strengthening bilateral relations and co-operation between the two countries in the fields of mining, retail, insurance, transport, tourism, banking, telecommunications, construction, services, franchising, manufacturing, fishing, advertising, aviation and energy.

The session was a platform to discuss regional, continental and

multilateral issues of mutual interest.

The bilateral political relations between South Africa and Ghana are very good, with both countries maintaining residential diplomatic missions in each other's capitals.

There are more than 61 registered South African companies operating in Ghana. They include MTN, AngloGold Ashanti, Goldfields, Shoprite, Woolworths, Game, Group 5, Stanbic Bank, SABMiller, Engen, Steers, SAA and Multichoice.

SA investors are active in mining, retail, insurance, transport, tourism and banking. - Staff Reporter

Sparks looks back on his career

GERMAN ambassador to South Africa, Walter Lindner, yesterday played host to legendary South African journalist, Allister Sparks, author of the memoir *The Sword and the Pen*.

Sparks looked back on six decades at the forefront of political change in South Africa and considered some of the choices which he made: such as whether or not to publish explicit pictures of the Sharpeville Massacre

in the Rand Daily Mail.

A discussion, moderated by radio personality Yolani Gwala, touched on many issues, including racism, which continue to haunt South Africa more than 20 years into democracy. The discussion was positive, with Sparks saying the media was robust and would not easily lie down.

Lindner said his home would always be a second home for journalists and free speech.