

Italy – South Africa dialogues aimed at fostering strong bilateral ties

The Embassy of Italy in South Africa and the National Aerospace Centre (NAC) hosted a bilateral matchmaking event on the 4th and 5th December 2017 at the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) International Convention Centre in Pretoria. This was in collaboration with the Gauteng Growth and development Agency (GGDA), National Aerospace Centre (NAC), Commercial Aviation Manufacturing Association of South Africa (CAMASA) and the Italian Trade Commission (ICE).

The event focused on the aerospace sector with the aim of creating bilateral business collaborations, joint ventures and commercial opportunities between Italian and South African businesses operating in the sector. The discussions focused on aerospace industry clustering; space technologies and projects; advanced manufacturing & materials as well as mega aerospace projects.

The two day conference included business meetings scheduled between either representatives from the private sector, universities and research institutions, industry associations, innovators, SMMEs, and policy makers from both countries to foster the bilateral and regional collaborations. Although these engagements results will not be overnight but there's certainly hope that this session will yield favourable results which will ultimately have beneficial impact on our respective economies.

Another highlight was the discussion around government incentives and benefits with some of the industry challenges and successes highlighted as examples in both SA and Italy, e.g. the space technologies and projects (small satellites), satellite communications, space science and technology and exploration; Copernicus and earth observation, positioning, navigation and timing; as well as space situational awareness.

Overall the event was well organised and there was a good turnout. There was very significant inputs that were made over the two day programme. What stood out was the looming potential for growth in the aerospace industry. Should collaboration be fully utilised, not only SMMEs stand to benefit but universities, policy makers and government program prioritisation methods and many others could share knowledge and build strong foundations for our future generations.