

# SA, Ethiopia sign visa waiver for officials

South Africa and Ethiopia have signed an agreement on the waiver of visa requirements for holders of diplomatic or official/service passports.



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This, President Cyril Ramaphosa and Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali said in a joint communiqué, is expected to ease the travel of officials, which will contribute to further strengthening bilateral relations.

The signing of the agreement emanates from the official visit by Prime Minister Ali to South Africa over the weekend. The two-day visit was the first State level exchange of visits between the two countries.

Prime Minister Ali was also a guest at the 108th anniversary of the founding of the African National Congress on 11 January 2020.

President Ramaphosa was accompanied by the Ministers of International Relations and Cooperation; Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development; State Security; Home Affairs; Trade, Industry and Competition; Higher Education, Science and Technology, and for the signing ceremony, the Minister of Health and the Minister of Tourism.

Prime Minister Ali was accompanied by the Ministers of Social and Labour Affairs, Mines and Petroleum and the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

The two countries signed a memorandum of understanding on cooperation in the field of tourism. The two Heads of State anticipate the MoU will be key to the creation of employment opportunities, especially for the youth.

South Africa and Ethiopia also signed a memorandum on cooperation in the field of health.

"The memorandum will be important in providing high quality health services for the citizens of their respective countries, especially the young and the elderly," read the communique.

## **Strengthening trade relations**

On matters of trade, the principals welcomed the presence of South African companies and business entities in Ethiopia, including investment and trade links, and it was agreed to enhance bilateral investments between the two countries.

At the same time, the principals affirmed their commitment to expanding cooperation in trade and investment between business entities in South Africa and Ethiopia, as well as agreeing to cooperate in the field of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) due to their important role in job creation.

"There was also agreement to strengthen cooperation in the area of mining, deep mining and mineral beneficiation to strengthen agricultural cooperation so as to enhance food security and to work towards addressing skills development through the exchange of best practices, among others," the communique said.

## **Migration**

President Ramaphosa and Prime Minister Ali discussed the issue of Ethiopians residing in South Africa and agreed that the two countries need to cooperate on this matter.

The two leaders further agreed on the need for both countries to work together to address illegal migration, human trafficking and smuggling.

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