

REGIONAL NEWS

SOUTHERN AFRICA

Editorial

DEAR READERS

The enduring relationship between Switzerland and South Africa is a welcome reminder of how diplomacy can build bridges across differences and turn diversity into a source of strength. With more than a century of ties and growing cooperation in trade, investment, science, education and skills

development, the partnership today reaches far beyond traditional diplomacy. Have a look at this article which offers an insightful glimpse into a relationship grounded in mutual respect, shared values and a commitment to working together for the future.

WARM REGARDS, GISELA PIERCEY



GISELA PIERCEY,
EDITOR «SWISS REVIEW
SOUTHERN AFRICA»

Zimbabwe:

A new envoy, a new impetus: Swiss Ambassador presents credentials in Harare

Switzerland's new Ambassador to Zimbabwe, Mrs. Christine Schraner Burgener, has formally begun her tour of duty after presenting her credentials to President Emmerson Mnangagwa at State House in Harare. She will also serve as Switzerland's Ambassador to Zambia and Malawi, with residence in Harare.

The ceremony was more than a diplomatic formality. It came as Zimbabwe seeks to deepen its engagement with international partners and attract investment, while Switzerland looks to build on a relationship that already extends across development cooperation, trade, investment, innovation and people-to-people ties.

President Mnangagwa described the relationship with Switzerland as one in which there is scope to deepen partnerships in development, innovation and commerce. Ambassador Schraner Burgener, for her part, pointed to the substantial presence of



Swiss companies in Zimbabwe and said she would encourage more Swiss enterprises to explore opportunities in the country.

There is a practical reason for this emphasis on business. Zimbabwe has considerable economic potential, from mining and agriculture to tourism and renewable energy, but converting potential into investment requires confidence, predictability and strong commercial relationships. The double taxation agreement between Switzerland and Zimbabwe, which the Ambassador highlighted, pro-

vides one of the instruments for making greater economic engagement easier.

The agenda is broader than trade. Switzerland and Zimbabwe already cooperate in areas including governance, human rights, peacebuilding and development, with Swiss-supported programmes designed to strengthen institutions, livelihoods and resilience. The new Ambassador's experience spans diplomacy, international cooperation and conflict prevention.

Ambassador Christine Schraner Burgener presents her credentials, signalling a renewed focus on partnership, investment and practical cooperation
— © Ministry of Information, Zimbabwe

South Africa

Switzerland and South Africa Celebrate Enduring Diplomatic Ties

Switzerland and South Africa reaffirmed the strength and depth of their long-standing bilateral relationship during the Swiss National Day Reception held at the Residence of Switzerland in Waterkloof, Pretoria, in August.

Hosted by H.E. Mr. Mirko Manzoni, Ambassador of Switzerland to South Africa, the reception brought together representatives of government, the diplomatic corps, business, civil society and other stakeholders to celebrate Switzerland's National Day while reflecting on the growing partnership between the two countries.

Representing the South African Government was Honourable Pieter Groenewald, Minister of Correctional Services, who delivered the keynote address. In his opening remarks, Ambassador Manzoni reflected on the significance of Swiss National Day and the history of the Swiss Confederation, while drawing parallels between Switzerland and South Africa.

Switzerland, he noted, is a country of four official languages and 26 cantons, while South Africa has 12 official languages. Despite their differences, both countries have demonstrated that diversity can coexist with national unity. Ambassador Manzoni also reflected on his diplomatic career and his experience working in countries affected by conflict and political instability. He said his experience had shaped his appreciation for dialogue and the importance of choosing cooperation over division.



Photo: Honourable Pieter Groenewald (in the middle) with Swiss Ambassador to South Africa, Mirko Manzoni (on the right).

Since arriving in South Africa in 2023, the Ambassador said he had travelled across all nine provinces, giving him an opportunity to experience the country's diversity, resilience, beauty and challenges firsthand.

Minister Groenewald highlights South Africa's diversity

Minister Groenewald echoed the Ambassador's remarks, emphasising the importance of national identity, diversity and mutual respect. Welcoming guests in several languages, including English, German and Setswana, the Minister said the country's diversity should be viewed as a strength rather than a source of division. He highlighted South Africa's constitutional commitment to diversity and noted that South African Sign Language had become the country's 12th official language. For Minister Groenewald, the national anthems played at diplomatic occasions provide a powerful reminder that countries can maintain their distinct identities while working together towards a shared future.

"Strength in our diversity."

The Minister also praised Switzerland for

its political stability, respect for differences and long-standing democratic traditions, joking about Switzerland's frequent referendums and its famously disciplined approach to traffic rules.

A relationship built over more than a century

The Swiss–South African relationship has deep historical roots. According to Switzerland's Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, the first Swiss consulate in South Africa was opened in Pretoria in 1887, with the representation elevated to embassy status in 1960. The relationship has since expanded well beyond diplomatic representation to encompass trade and investment, science and research, education, skills development, culture, peace mediation and multilateral cooperation.

Switzerland's Federal Department of Foreign Affairs reports that bilateral trade between Switzerland and South Africa exceeded CHF 5.8 billion in 2025. More than 100 Swiss companies have subsidiaries or production facilities in South Africa, employing approximately 50,000 people.

The two countries also maintain extensive cooperation in science, research and innovation. Their Swiss–South African Joint Research Programme, established in 2007, has supported scientific and technological cooperation between researchers in both countries.



The Swiss Ambassador has visited all nine provinces of South Africa.

Article: Mndeni Mthabela, www.diplomacysa.co.za

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Associated Groups: Swiss Choir, Swiss Rifle Club, Swiss Golf, Senior Swiss Circle meets every 2nd Saturday of the month for Lunch, Swiss Ladies meet every 4th Thursday of the month for lunch.

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■ We shoot at the Navy's KLAVER shooting range off Red Hill road above Simon's Town, near "Just Nuisance" grave. Occasionally we use the Atlantis 'Good Hope' range of the SA Army. In May we hold our popular 'Piggy Shoot' at the WCSU range, also near Atlantis.

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■ JASS EVENTS: This is held on the second Friday of each month and will commence at 2 p.m. and is held at Rolf Klein Jass Stube, 3 Bona Terra Road, Assagay (directions on our website).

■ SPORT TARGET SHOOTING: Held on the 4th Saturday of each month (weather permitting) commencing at 08:30 a.m.- Nottingham Road (calendar available on our website).

*For more up-to-date information regarding times/venues/directions, please visit our most informative website – www.swissclubnatal.org.za

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