



the premier

Department of
the Premier
FREE STATE PROVINCE

MEDIA RELEASE

SISTERHOOD TWINNING AGREEMENT WITH MATANZAS CITY – CUBA

The Free State Provincial Government and the Province of Matanza in Cuba signed a Sisterhood Twinning agreement at the City's Town Hall on Tuesday, 26 October 2004. The historical agreement took place at the time when political relations between South Africa and Cuba have strengthened. South Africa under the leadership of President Thabo Mbeki, has pledged support for Cuba's efforts in lobbying the United Nations Assembly to denounce the United States Economic Blockade against the republic of Cuba.

The agreement signed by Free State Premier, Ms Beatrice Marshoff and Matanzas Province President, Tomas Diaz Fundora, commits the two provinces to co-operate on exchanging information on the fields of Tourism, Science and Technology, Environment, Health, Education, Sports and Recreation, Arts Culture, Agriculture, Food security, Housing, Bio-Technology and other fields of mutual trust.

The two provinces have agreed to exchange experiences in regard to the above-mentioned areas of interest as well as facilitating deeper knowledge on the histories, social life and traditions of the populations of the respective Provinces.

The Free State will benefit from the agreement by, among other things, sending more students from the province to Cuba to study medicine in the next few years. The Matanza Province has also agreed to send more Housing Engineers to the Free State Province as part of bilateral between the two country's' National Government. The Free State Province will also send its sports trainers and coaches to Matanza for training. Matanzas Province is home to the best sports academy in Cuba and the world. It has produced many Olympic medallists in the past few years.

The Free State Premier has also promised to ensure that there are regular cultural exchanges between the two provinces. Matanzas has the largest number of important Cultural Museums in Cuba. Historically, Matanzas has had the largest number of African Slaves during the Spanish Colonial Rule and is today a home to diverse cultural groups in Cuba.

Speaking during the signing of the agreement, Premier Marshoff hailed the agreement as a milestone in the strengthening of bilateral relations between the two countries. "We should seek to develop a concrete programme to implement and monitor the effective implementation of this agreement. It should be dynamic agreement, which directs our relations, and it should not be a useless paper agreement that we signed and immediately forget about", said Premier Marshoff. She said, "I have great expectations for the success of this agreement, and for the part of the Free State, I will direct our officials to develop a concrete Programme of Action of implementation within a month of the signing of agreement".

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