

SOUTH AFRICA-JAPAN RELATIONS

1. BILATERAL RELATIONS

Political

South Africa and Japan have co-operated for 103 years, with the year 1910 marking the beginning of official trade and diplomatic relations between the two countries. However, full diplomatic relations between a democratic South Africa and Japan were only established after 1994 when former President Mandela visited Japan in July 1995.

The South Africa-Japan bilateral relationship takes place under the auspices of the annual Partnership Forum. The purpose of the Partnership Forum is to provide a framework within which both countries are able to continuously work towards strengthening, developing and broadening relations at high levels to the benefit of both countries. Discussions are held over a wide variety of areas such as: Domestic and International Political issues; Development Co-operation; Science and Technology; Health; Economy; Trade; Education; Agriculture; Safety and Security, Energy; Culture; African Development, as well as peace initiatives and post-conflict reconstruction, and co-operation in important issues on the multilateral agenda, including the reform of the UN and the Security Council. The last Partnership Forum was held in South Africa on 1 March 2013.

Through its Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) programme, Japan has supported South Africa's human resource development under the auspices of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). This assistance is provided in close alignment with South Africa's Human Resource Development Strategy (HRDSA). Thus far more than 1300 South Africans have been trained in various training courses in Japan. In 2001 the two countries signed an agreement for the dispatch of Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOVC) who have been deployed in South Africa and have provided assistance in the education, health and agriculture sectors.

2. ECONOMIC RELATIONS

Japan is consistently one of South Africa's top trading partners with the country being South Africa's 3rd largest export destination and the 4th largest import source in 2012. South Africa is Japan's largest African trading partner and enjoys trade surplus with Japan. South Africa's exports to Japan totalled USD6.4 billion in 2012, and imports from Japan were at USD4.1 billion. South Africa recorded about USD2.4 billion trade surplus with Japan in 2012. Trade figures indicate that the trade surplus that South Africa achieved with Japan in 2008 of USD4.4 billion was by far the largest surplus achieved in South Africa's bilateral trade with the country.

SA EXPORT TO AND IMPORTS FROM JAPAN 2012 (USD Billion)

Year	Exports	Imports	Trade Balance
2008	9.0	4.6	4.4
2009	5.0	2.6	2.4
2010	7.3	3.8	3.4
2011	8.5	4.3	4.1
2012	6.4	4.1	2.4

South Africa welcomes the sound and healthy trade relationship and strongly welcomes the increased beneficiation and value addition in South Africa, through our exports to Japan as well as in new Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) from Japan, which is already one of the larger investors in South Africa. Amongst the 108 Japanese companies in South Africa are Toyota; Nissan; Mitsubishi Corporation, Mitsui Co Ltd and Sumitomo.

Both countries wish to see an increase in trilateral co-operation with third countries in the rest of Africa in an effort to extend and promote economic growth and development on the continent.