

# *Cuba and South Africa Celebrate Two Decades of Strong Friendship*

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Havana, May 10 (RHC) – South Africa considers of great importance bilateral relations of friendship and cooperation with Cuba and is willing to keep strengthening such links at all levels, said South African ambassador to Havana Naptal Manana during a ceremony marking the 20th anniversary of the end of apartheid and the establishment of bilateral diplomatic relations with the island.

Ambassador Manana thanked Cuba for its support during the Angolan and Namibian liberation struggles and to put an end to the former South African racist regime. “Cubans did not go to Africa to plunder or steal our resources,” the South African ambassador noted. “On the contrary, they helped us to conquer freedom and justice.”

He also appreciated bilateral cooperation in the academic field and different services, as well as the permanent mutual support in the international arena.

The diplomat also referred to the recent electoral process in South Africa, in which the African National Congress of Nelson Mandela maintains the lead.

Meanwhile, Cuba's First Deputy Foreign Minister Marcelino Medina ratified the strong friendship uniting the two peoples and expressed his appreciation for the firm support of South Africa in the battle for the lifting of the U.S. economic blockade of Cuba, as well as the return of the Cuban anti-terrorist fighters still held in US prisons.

The ceremony, which was held at the Cuban Foreign Ministry, was headed by the second secretary of the Cuban Communist Party and country's vice president, Jose Ramon Machado Ventural.

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