

## Jamaica to welcome South Africa President for Jamaica 50

The President of the Republic of South Africa, His Excellency Jacob Gedleyihlekisa Zuma, will be a guest of Jamaica during a State Visit to mark Jamaica's Golden Jubilee from Saturday, August 4 to Tuesday, August 7, 2012.

On arrival at the Norman Manley International Airport, President Zuma will be accorded a Guard of Honour furnished by the Jamaica Defence Force. President Zuma will hold bilateral talks with the Most Hon. Portia Simpson Miller and members of her Cabinet. He will also call on the Leader of the Opposition, the Hon. Andrew Holness. He will be the Guest of Honour at a State Dinner to be hosted by the Governor General and Lady Allen and will attend various events in celebration of Jamaica 50. President Zuma will also experience some of Jamaica's tourism attractions. President Zuma, who became the Head of the largest political party of South Africa, the African National Congress (ANC), in 2007, was elected President of South Africa in 2009. He visits Jamaica in the 100th year of the ANC and the 16th year of South Africa's (post-Apartheid) Constitution. During the period of apartheid, Mr Zuma was imprisoned for ten years on Robben Island. After his release, he continued the struggle to make South Africa a democratic country and was integral in negotiations that led to the lifting of the ban on the ANC in 1990. President Zuma is credited with great strategic thinking and conflict resolution skills that played a pivotal role in ending conflict in the KwaZulu Natal (KZN) region of South Africa. That experience has aided his efforts as mediator and facilitator of peace on the African continent. In South Africa itself, President Zuma's major focus is on promoting social equity and justice. He has strengthened the Broad-Based Black Empowerment Act to prevent non-compliance, circumvention and abuse. He has taken action to accelerate universal access to education and improve health services. He has launched the South Africa Renewable Initiative which is a funding mechanism designed to unlock the country's green energy potential and reduce the burden on its citizens. The President has also mainstreamed job creation in every government body and has developed partnerships between government, the private sector and labour, having declared the inescapable need for a common purpose and determination to build South Africa. The Republic of South Africa is a nation of 50 million people with eleven official languages. The country has an abundant supply of natural resources; well-developed financial, legal, communications, energy, and transport sectors; a stock exchange that is the 18th largest in the world; and modern infrastructure supporting a relatively efficient distribution of goods to major urban centers throughout the region. Jamaica and South Africa have a long history that pre-dated independence when Premier Norman Manley declared a blockade of trade between Jamaica and South Africa, which had an apartheid government at that time. Jamaica's consistent opposition to apartheid and renowned international advocacy for global action against that heinous regime and its unswerving support for the ANC formed the basis of today's excellent bilateral relations. Diplomatic relations were established between Jamaica and South Africa in 1994, following the election of a representative majority government in post-apartheid South Africa. The Jamaican High Commission in Pretoria was opened in late 2006. Since the formal establishment of diplomatic relations in 1994, Jamaica and South Africa have deepened their relations. An Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Arts and Culture was signed in 2009. There is an active Jamaica -South Africa Friendship Association (JASAFA). The observance of the United Nation's Nelson Mandela International Day - which is dedicated to further tolerance, peace and reconciliation - is now being observed in Jamaica. Mr. Mandela visited Jamaica in 1991 when he was the head of the ANC and before he was elected as the first President in a democratic South Africa. In 2003, South African President Thabo Mbeki became the first South African Head of State to visit Jamaica. It is expected that President Zuma's State Visit will serve to diversify bilateral relations and promote cooperation in various fields.