

SA, Russia sign fisheries cooperation intent

PRETORIA: The Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) has signed a statement of intent on cooperation in fisheries with Russia at the 5th Brics Summit currently underway in Durban.



A total of nine agreements were signed by different ministers.

"As South Africa hosts the 5th Brics Summit, there is mounting pressure on us to not just have a talk shop. We have to gear our energy towards ensuring that the agreements that we sign among our partners will be converted into action.

"This agreement will be beneficial to South Africa for a number of reasons, including capacitating human capital through training opportunities and combating unregulated fishing.

"Poaching has major repercussions for the sustainability of our resources," said Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Minister Tina Joemat-Pettersson.

The statement of intent was signed for the conclusion of a future agreement on cooperation in the field of fisheries, based on the conservation and rational use of living marine resources; the prevention, deterrence and elimination of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, and the exchange of information and data on the fisheries-related issues, among others. These are of interest to both parties.

Currently, South Africa exports no fisheries products to Russia and the statement of intent recognises the importance of technical and economic cooperation among developing countries through the exchange of information, experience and research in the field of fisheries.

Oranges, grapes, grapefruit and apples are among the top 10 agriculture and forestry products that are exported to Russia.

Fisheries are a major contributor to South Africa's economy. The commercial sector contributes roughly R6 billion into the economy.

Brics is an acronym for the powerful grouping of the world's leading emerging economies, namely Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.

The aim of South Africa hosting the conference is to harness the country's membership to benefit the entire continent.

South Africa officially became a member of Brics on 24 December 2010, after being formally invited by the Bric countries to join the group.

South Africa's position going into the summit is to align Brics member countries' interests in supporting the integration agenda in Africa, and not just focusing on access to the country's resources.

The summit concludes on Wednesday, 27 March 2013.

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