

# SA maritime industry opens for business

CAPE TOWN: The South African maritime industry has opened for business and has encouraged partnerships with those prepared to give local seafarers an opportunity to support international trade.

Speaking on board the SA Agulhas 1, which was docked next to HMS Belfast in London, on Tuesday night, 4 December 2012, Sindiswe Chikunga, Deputy Minister of Transport said: "It makes business sense that in creating the supply market that we are influenced by the ever changing demands of your businesses which currently are recovering from the global economic and financial crisis."

The SA Agulhas is a dedicated training vessel. Chikunga departed Cape Town on November 2, travelling to Britain with 62 cadets, 12 of whom are West Africa, on board.

SA Agulhas is due to dock in Cape Town after delivering an expedition team that will attempt the first-ever winter crossing of the Antarctic, called the "Coldest Journey Ever".

"There are over 1.5 million seafaring jobs available in the world's major fleets. South Africa only contributed 2 500 people towards those jobs, nonetheless the South African Maritime Association (SAMSA) was playing a crucial role towards world trade," Chikunga said.

With the African economy expected to grow by about 7% year on year, most countries in the continent were rebuilding their ports' infrastructure to handle the additional trade required to fuel this high growth continent.

In this way marine cadets from across the continent could find a natural home on a shipping line.

SAMSA CEO Commander Tsietsi Mokhele said: "We are not putting a case for an insular continent which deals with itself. But we want to play a role to contribute towards the global sea trade. South Africa is producing cadet officers of a high calibre that should be a solution to the global market. We know the world markets are recovering from a crisis. Shipping is the answer for a balanced economy and world trade."

South African High Commissioner to the United Kingdom Dr Zola Skweyiya said it was crucial to encourage SAMSA and the government to find jobs, and for the nations of Africa participating in the maritime programme to ensure better opportunities for Africans across the continent.

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