

SA, Belarus discuss cooperation in agriculture

South Africa and Belarus marked the beginning of an important relationship with the two countries establishing a working group in facilitating bilateral cooperation in agriculture.



(Image: GCIS)

Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Tina Joemat-Pettersson and Head of Presidential Affairs in Belarus Viktor Vladimirovich Sheiman on Sunday held a meeting to discuss further cooperation in the field of agriculture between the two countries.

Belarus expressed its interest to deepen relations with South Africa by informing the country of their potential in the agro industrial and scientific sectors.

The meeting comes two weeks before South Africa hosts the BRICS Summit.

A Memorandum of Understanding was signed during the meeting, which intends to discuss further cooperation in the field of agriculture between the two countries.

Joemat-Pettersson said that the signing of the statement of intent is just the beginning of an ongoing process between the two countries.

"We will inform South Africans on the progress of the negotiations and partnerships. We are confident that further discussions will identify key sectors and that new opportunities will be created for our farmers," she said.

She added that the BRICS Summit would expose the country to many opportunities that South Africa can take advantage of in the international arena.

Food insecurity

"As we face the challenges of food insecurity, poverty and joblessness, opportunities such as today are a good indication of the level of faith that our partners in the world have for South African agriculture," Joemat-Pettersson said.

South Africa will host the summit, which will take place on 26-27 March in Durban, with the aim of harnessing the country's membership to benefit the entire African continent.

South Africa's position going into the summit is to align BRICS member countries' interests in supporting

integration agenda in Africa, and not just focusing on access to the country's resources.

South Africa's membership of BRICS should be understood in the context of the country's aim to tackle the developmental challenges faced by Africa as a whole, and its strategic focus on infrastructure as a key vehicle for creating jobs, boosting Africa's overall competitiveness, and promoting regional integration on the continent.

BRICS is an acronym for the powerful grouping of the world's leading emerging economies, namely Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. The first BRIC Summit took place in Yekaterinburg, Russia, where the elected leaders of the four countries formally declared the membership of the BRIC economic bloc. South Africa joined the bloc in 2010, resulting in BRICS.

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

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