



Foreword by the Honourable Deputy Minister of Communications and Digital Technologies, Mr Philly Mapulane (MP)

Following an uncertain period during which South Africa and the world collaborated in bringing our people back from the brink of a potentially catastrophic pandemic, we are glad that we are once again hosting an international event on our shores. Our hosting of this event is further proof that when we join hands with the international community, we can overcome any challenges of this century, and beyond.

Between 8 and 12 November we will welcome the international community to our beautiful City of Cape Town, where we will host the International Philately Exhibition at the Cape Town International Convention Centre. South Africa was chosen to collaborate with the Federation International De Philatelie (FIP), an organisation that plays an important role in the celebration of the international community of philately collection and exhibition.

The theme for this year's Exhibition is "Road To Democracy", which has a particular significance for us socially and politically, and is a continuation of the celebration of our reintegration into the global community of democratic nations. We are honoured to extend our hand of Ubuntu to the philatelic community and thank them for the important role they have played even during our darkest period, through propagating messages of the equality of all people through the design, collection and sharing of stamps.

Throughout the history of mankind, stamps have always played an important part in the transfer of cultural, social and historical messages, across the world. Stamps travel the world and in so doing, communicate important

historical events to a global audience, and share with the world significant data on the evolution of our species, and in the celebration of our diversity.

As a department, we are glad that our own South African Post Office is a key role player at this year's exhibition. The South African Post Office has over the years been central not only in the development of philatelic material, but also in making it possible to keep in touch with the world. After our transition to democracy, the South African Post Office ensured that the history of our nation was presented to the world in a positive and accurate context, while ensuring that we celebrate important milestones and recognise those behind these milestones.

Today, across the world, stamps that celebrate the heroes of our struggle to attain democracy, and the important historical figures of our nation, enjoy a prominent role in stamp collections. This is through the efforts of the South African Post Office to produce and distribute stamps that communicate to the world our true identity as a nation. This year, for the International Philatelic Exhibition, the South African Post Office has once again produced a stamp that will be launched at this exhibition. This stamp features the key aspirations of our people, embodied in the peace dove which became such an important symbol of our democratic process, and our constitution, on which we continue to build an inclusive nation that respects and safeguards the rights of all our people.

This is also an occasion for us to honour and celebrate the international community, without whom the very steep road to our democracy, would have been even more difficult. As part of the international solidarity leg of our struggle against oppression, many countries across the world joined our struggle on this journey to democracy, and the hosting of this event is a joint celebration and our own contribution (in return) to international efforts to bring humanity together around our common goals and aspirations. We wish all participants a successful exhibition and invite you to also enjoy the hospitality of South Africa and its people.