

SA exhibitors show off products at China's trade fair

XIAMEN, CHINA: The annual China International Fair for Investment and Trade (CIFIT) got underway on Sunday, 8 September, with South African exhibitors showing off their wares.



Rob Davies (Image: GCIS)

The event kicked off at a packed Xiamen International Exhibition Centre where 62 South African companies are participating in the fair. CIFIT is currently China's only international investment promotion event aimed at facilitating bilateral investment.

One of the 62 companies represented at the fair is the black and women owned Seffikile Wines (we have arrived) which was exhibiting for the first time at CIFIT.

"The fact that it attracts people from all over is amazing," owner Nondumiso Pikashe told SAnews from her stand at the South African pavilion. Pikashe expressed her eagerness to export her wines.

Pikashe is representing one of the 62 companies that were selected for CIFIT under the Department of Trade and Industry's (dti) Export Marketing and Investment Assistance Scheme (EMIA). EMIA partially compensates exporters for costs incurred in respect of activities aimed at developing export markets for South African products and services and recruiting new foreign direct investment into South Africa.

SA products promoted

Certain criteria have to be met to qualify for EMIA. Among others these are the export readiness of the applicant, the type of product for export and local sales performance and export production performance.

The message that Pikashe wants the Chinese market to know is that the wine, produced in Wellington, in the Western Cape

is uniquely South African. "The flavours speak to the world. What's inside the bottle is of a high quality," she says.

Although the company does not yet export any wines it supplies wine to retailers Makro and Game. The company's Ntamera sauvignon blanc is served as one of the wines in South African Airways' premium class selection.

At CIFIT, South Africa has been granted Country of Honour status as part of the celebrations marking 15 years of diplomatic relations with South Africa.

"The fact that they chose us [as a country of honour] shows that they recognise us as having potential. It shows that they have a degree of interest in strengthening relations with us," Trade and Industry Minister, Rob Davies told SAnews.

Diemersfontein Wines which is also exhibiting at the fair exports their wines to several countries. Exhibitor Denise Stubbs said the Chinese market understood the culture of wine.

Diemersfontein Wines, which is well known for its pinotage, exports wines at prices that range from UD3\$ to US\$750 a bottle.

Davies said that the South African pavilion was exhibiting value added products that can find their way into the Chinese market.

The total value of Chinese investments into South Africa stood at US\$440m - mainly from mined raw materials. Davies points out that South Africa's investment regime was one that is attractive to business partners such as China.

In March this year, Chinese President Xi Jinping paid a state visit to South Africa, further deepening China's co-operation between BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) countries and Africa.

China is South Africa's biggest trading partner and a significant investor in the South African economy, with exports from South Africa to China in 2012 totalling R89bn. Imports from China to South Africa totalled R112bn. meaning that joint trade was worth R201bn last year.

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