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**WELCOME ADDRESS BY H.E. SIBONGISENI DLAMINI-MNTAMBO, HIGH COMMISSIONER OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA, AT THE SOUTH AFRICAN WINE TASTING RECEPTION  
12 JANUARY 2020**

Dean of the Diplomatic corps,

Excellencies,

Mr Pentz,

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good Naand, Good Evening, Sanibonani, Bonsoir

Let me begin by wishing each of you a very Happy New Year! In that list of your new year resolutions please double check that you have included “strictly South African wines” as your wines of choice from 2020 onwards.

I just came back from Jamaica, one of the most beautiful Caribbean islands, where I spent most of the time in the sun. I am not complaining about the Canadian weather. I am sure the High Commissioner of Jamaica will agree with me that the warmth of the Canadians sustains us during these harsh winters. However, the winter months will even go faster if you now and then spoil yourselves to a glass of South African wines or Amarula cream. That is exactly what I did as soon as I got back home from Jamaica.

My bosses at the High Commission told me- that I only have five minutes-five minutes on the podium! Honestly, ... how is that possible?

I cannot in five minutes do justice and tell you what I want to about my beautiful country and its weather. South Africa, a country we sometimes affectionately refer to as Mzansi – it is breathtaking, captivating, bustling and alive with endless possibilities.

In every province, around every corner, there is a magic moment waiting to leave you inspired with incredible people underpinning it all. From city life to adventure, from wildlife to culture, from breathtaking scenery to sun-soaked beaches we have it all. This is a country which offers tourists from around the world stunning holiday experiences and world-class hospitality.

In South Africa you can enjoy your stay at the coast (if you are brave enough) diving with the sharks, surfing, enjoying the 150km of spectacular coral reefs all of which are in a Marine Protected area. We are a country that celebrates diversity and Durban, my home town is just a melting pot of cultures and cuisines. Its mild sub-tropical climate and world class infrastructure attracts millions of tourists each year.

If you prefer, you can always escape to the interior and visit places like the spectacular valley of thousand hills, the Drakensberg Mountains," one of the most popular holiday destinations in KwaZulu-Natal and is home to the country's highest peaks. This region encompasses the World Heritage-listed uKhahlamba-Drakensberg Park, a region of jaw-dropping beauty, a magnificent cliff face and source of South Africa's main rivers.

In Mpumalanga, dense forests flourish in the sheltered God's window, the Blyde River Canyon and the great gaping gorges are a must see. If you love animals you can visit the Kruger National Park which is one of the largest game reserves in Africa. The Park's high density of wild animals includes the famous Big 5: lions, leopards, rhinos, elephants and buffalos. It is also home to bushman rock paintings and archaeological sites.

Johannesburg has a rich history which you can learn by visiting the poignant museums and galleries including a visit to Soweto, to Nelson Mandela's house, Hector Peterson's memorial, Bishop Tutu's house to name a few.

South Africa is also popularly known as the "wine country" which is arguably the best in the world!! We have been making wine for more than 350 years. In the beautiful city of Cape Town, at the Cape

Agulhus your eyes can feast to where the two oceans meet. It is in this city that you will find Table Mountain, the Robben Island, and hundreds of wine farms. Cape Town was recently voted the world's best tourist city for the seventh (7<sup>th</sup>) time. Every tourist who has visited Cape Town has fallen in love with its majestic beauty. South Africa's parliament is located in Cape Town.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I can spend the entire evening waxing lyrically about the beauty of South Africa, but I know that you are patiently waiting to hear from our special guest and sample his wines.

During the cocktails I saw how most of you were swirling, taking in the aromas, admiring the tears/legs on your glasses and when you took that sip! I think I know what went through most of your minds. Damn, nothing compares! And I absolutely concur; our wines hit the right notes. This is because we have the terroir, wines are our identity, our symbol of love and passion. The vines are grown on our beautiful soil. When you drink South African wines, you will taste the passion, therein lies our hearts, our gift to the world!

So, to talk more about the consistent quality and novelty of our wines and in particular Groote Post wines I am extremely proud to welcome Mr Nick Pentz from South Africa who has travelled a long way to share this special evening with us. Mr Pentz has already been to Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and Montreal in Quebec.

Third and fourth generation dairymen, Nick and Peter Pentz run Groote Post, their vineyard in the Darling Hills on the Cape's West Coast, approximately an hour's drive north of Cape Town. It is a historic estate with a traditional Dutch gabled homestead dating back to 1808 and was originally a guarding post against cattle rustlers. The Pentz family originally owned a dairy business producing milk. The family no longer has a dairy herd, but the 3000-hectare estate raises sheep and cattle, grows cereal crops and includes a restaurant - Hilda's Kitchen, which serves their delicious homegrown produce. 117 hectares of vineyards are planted on cooler slopes on clay soils benefitting from the ocean breezes, with wines made by Lukas Wentzel.

Meneer Pentz, Nou sal ek net a bitjie afrikaans probeer om te spreek. Ek is baie bly dat U om Kanada gekom het. Ek is altyd bly and trots as ek goeie gehalte Suid-Afrikaanse produkte in hierdie markte te sien. En vandag is nie verskil nie, welkom.

I am looking forward to listening to you as you share with us the incredible anecdotes of the history of your wines. You are indeed brave and courageous to have left die sonnige Suid Afrika vir die koue van Kanada which has however been considerably mild for this time of the year. However, I am convinced that after sampling your delectable wines, we will be feeling slightly warmer!!

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you for choosing to spend time with us this evening and learning more about one of South Africa's best exports – wine.

And now let us welcome Mr Nick Pentz to the podium.