

# SAA, Air China to strengthen relations

PRETORIA: South Africa's national carrier South African Airways (SAA) and Air China are to strengthen relations, said the national carrier on Friday, 5 December.



"Upon the State visit of the South African President to China, Air China and South African Airways (SAA) announce the further strengthening of their bilateral cooperation within Star Alliance as part of the strengthened cooperation between the two countries," said SAA.

This comes as President Jacob Zuma wraps up his State visit to China today. The President is in that country at the invitation of Chinese President Xi Jinping.

"The key element in this strengthened relationship will be some network reconfiguration for both airlines to provide better passenger and cargo services between South Africa and China and countries adjacent to both," said the airline.

Air China President Song Zhiyong and Acting SAA Chief Executive Officer, Nico Bezuidenhout, have agreed at a meeting at Air China headquarters on the immediate establishment of a Joint Working Group between the two airlines to immediately commence implementation.

This year marks the 16th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the South Africa and the People's Republic of China.

China has become South Africa's single largest trading partner in the world and South Africa has become China's largest trading partner in Africa. China regards South Africa as a key partner in advancing its relations with the African continent.