



First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia Ivica Dacic met today with Foreign Minister of the Kingdom of Lesotho Lesego Makgothi, who is on an official visit to the Republic of Serbia.

Foreign Ministers of Serbia and Lesotho agreed that there was readiness on both sides to expand cooperation to include such areas as defence and cooperation in international organizations as well.

Minister Dacic said that the visit of the Foreign Minister of Lesotho was the first visit by an official of that country after so many years. He recalled that he officially visited that country in southern Africa in October this year.

"The two countries are geographically far away from each other, but they are characterized by their close friendship dating back to the time of President Josip Broz Tito and the Non-Aligned Movement. Cooperation with Lesotho began in 1966.

In view of our relations from the past it is important to revive our communication and exchange visits. We strongly support Lesotho, we are ready to offer assistance to each other and to cooperate in many areas. We are also ready to discuss defence cooperation and cooperation in international organizations, too", emphasized Minister Dacic.

With regard to economic cooperation between the two countries Minister Dacic said that it was not developed having in mind the geographic remoteness but he stressed that the economic chambers of the two countries intended to explore opportunities for cooperation.

The Serbian Foreign Minister pointed out that we were very grateful to Lesotho for its position regarding non-recognition of the unilateral declaration of independence of Kosovo.

Lesotho's Foreign Minister Makgothi said that in the cooperation with Serbia, his country relied on its ties from the times of the former Yugoslavia.

"Most people in Lesotho were very much favourable to Yugoslavia in the non-aligned era."

He said that he met Minister Dacic recently in the margins of the UN General Assembly and that

he soon invited him to visit Lesotho.

"I thought he would never come considering that we are a small country. However, he came in two weeks' time. We discussed various forms of cooperation and he left us draft agreements in order to examine possible cooperation areas', stressed Minister Makgothi.

The two Ministers signed today the Agricultural Cooperation Agreement between the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management of the Republic of Serbia and the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security of the Kingdom of Lesotho as well an Agreement between the Government of Serbia and the Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho on cultural and educational cooperation.