

Leaders convene to boost African growth

26 May 2006

Johannesburg, South Africa: Leaders from business, government, civil society and academia will convene at the 16th World Economic Forum on Africa on an agenda entitled *Going for Growth*.

Billed as the 'Davos of Africa', heads of state, top ministers and senior business leaders of African companies and multinationals active in Africa will review Africa's unprecedented growth path.

Focusing on the impact of China and India and the commodity price boom underpinning much of Africa's growth, leaders will identify priorities to sustain recent growth, assess new opportunities and address the challenges of boosting the physical and social infrastructure needed to sustain the resurgence of Africa.

At a pre-summit press conference in Johannesburg, Haiko Alfeld, Director for Africa at the World Economic Forum, commented that, "at an unprecedented 5.3% growth rate, the numbers finally support the aspirations, yet Africa is not creating the jobs to turn the tide. How do we ensure that we continue to focus on the right thing at the right time? In Cape Town, we will review how differing scenarios for developments on the global stage affect the continent and focus on the legacy of negative perception that continues to hinder investment and trade."

Among confirmed participants are a host of top executives of the largest African companies and multinationals active in Africa, as well as Presidents Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, Armando Emilio Guebuza of Mozambique and Jakaya Kikwete of Tanzania. Summit co-chairs leading the deliberations will be Syamal Gupta, Chairman, Tata International, India; Jim Goodnight, Chief Executive Officer, SAS Institute, USA; Maria Ramos, Chief Executive Officer, Transnet, South Africa and Charles Soludo, Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria.

Several **Forum initiatives** that seek to engage business leaders as catalysts of change will be active in Cape Town, including:

- The African Investment Climate Facility

The [African Investment Climate Facility \(AICF\)](#), a new private-public partnership focused on improving the continent's investment climate, will be launched at the Forum. Its mission is to make Africa an even better place to do business by removing obstacles to domestic and foreign investment and by promoting Africa as an attractive investment destination.

- Changing Perceptions of Africa

Leaders will tackle the legacy of negative perceptions of Africa and work on the critical interventions needed to improve the perceptions and brand of the continent. The ideas and continental success stories elaborated in Cape Town will be moulded into an ambitious branding campaign to be launched on the occasion of the World Economic Forum's Annual Meeting in Davos in January 2007.

- Hunger Initiative

The World Economic Forum will launch a [Business Alliance to Reduce Chronic Hunger](#) on the continent. In this proposed public-private partnership, committed Forum member companies and hunger experts will design a model for businesses to work together to attack the root causes of hunger through initiatives including expanding rural market systems, disseminating effective business models and microfinance.

- Energy Poverty Action

The World Economic Forum [Energy Poverty Action](#) taskforce is developing a pilot project for a sustainable, replicable and scalable model to implement grid and off-grid electrification schemes. The pilot project aims to electrify over 11,000 households and then to replicate successes across Africa.

- Strengthening Healthcare Systems

A report, *From Funding to Action: Strengthening Healthcare Systems in sub-Saharan Africa* will be launched at the World Economic Forum on Africa, calling on business to engage in public private partnerships to help improve the region's healthcare delivery systems. Download the report from: www.weforum.org/healthcaresystems. This link will be active as of 1 June.

- Partnering Against Corruption Initiative (PACI)

To date, some 100 leading corporations worldwide have signed a public statement of commitment to the Partnering Against Corruption - Principles for Countering Bribery, representing over US\$ 500 billion of annual revenue. In Cape Town, the World Economic Forum's [Partnering Against Corruption Initiative](#) will offer participating business leaders an opportunity to engage and demonstrate leadership in the global fight against corruption and bribery. Signatory companies acknowledge their commitment to implement a "zero tolerance" policy with respect to bribery and corruption as well as the development of an internal implementation programme.

- Water Initiative

The World Economic Forum's [Water Initiative](#) is currently engaging with a small group of corporate leaders from different sectors to develop a concept, based on a sound business case, to elaborate a win-win water partnership for business and government. At a private event at the Summit, a small group of multi-industry business leaders, government officials, water sector actors and donors from the Southern African Development Community will be invited for a dialogue on the water challenges from each stakeholder's perspective, and will discuss whether opportunity exists to potentially overcome any of these challenges through a constructive collaboration.

- Social Entrepreneurs

The [Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship](#), a sister organization of the World Economic Forum, and Mrs. Zanele Mbeki will announce the South African Social Entrepreneur of the Year 2006. The Schwab Foundation selects the Social Entrepreneur of the Year in 30 countries. Social Entrepreneurs are pioneers and implementers of innovative solutions to address social issues in a largely self-sustainable way. The current network of the Foundation spans 105 social entrepreneurs and their organizations from more than 40 countries.

Media Coverage

Over 120 journalists have registered to cover the Meeting. BBC World and CNBC will engage business leaders in televised debates. Nik Gowing, the BBC's main presenter, will host a BBC World Debate entitled, *The Future of African Growth*. CNBC will record a 'Global Players' discussion at the Forum, moderated by Sabine Christiansen, Germany's foremost talk show host.

Video blogging

The World Economic Forum will offer a video blog from the Meeting to allow a candid look behind the scenes of the Meeting. Have a look at: www.forumblog.org.

The World Economic Forum is an independent international organization committed to improving the state of the world by engaging leaders in partnerships to shape global, regional and industry agendas.

Incorporated as a foundation in 1971 and headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, the World Economic Forum is impartial and not-for-profit; it is tied to no political, partisan or national interests (<http://www.weforum.org>).

