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PRESIDENT RAMAPHOSA OUTLINES SOUTH AFRICA'S G20 PRESIDENCY PRIORITIES AT WEF

President Cyril Ramaphosa has highlighted the significance of South Africa's G20 Presidency and the economic priorities of the South African Government of National Unity during a special address to the 55th World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos-Klosters, Switzerland.

The President told world leaders that South Africa will focus its G20 Presidency on three themes—namely, solidarity, equality and sustainable development.

He emphasised the country's commitment to advancing a just energy transition, fostering inclusive growth, and addressing global inequalities.

"As a leading forum for international economic cooperation, the G20 plays an important role in shaping and strengthening global architecture and governance on major international economic issues," the President said.



He pointed out that the G20 is being hosted on the African continent for the first time in history.

“This is a moment of great significance for South Africa, the African continent, and the world in that it was in Africa where humans developed the capacity and the impulse for cooperation.

“Cooperation has been one of the key markers of human development, touching on many aspects of life, from survival and social organisation to technological and cultural progress, which is what the G20 was established for - to foster cooperation to deal with the challenges the world faces. Cooperation is the bedrock of human civilisation,” President Ramaphosa said.

He referred to former President Nelson Mandela’s speech at the WEF annual meeting 33 years ago, when Tata Madiba said: “Our interdependence, bringing us together into a common global home, across the oceans and the continents, demands that we all combine to launch a global offensive for development, prosperity and human survival.”

President Ramaphosa said South Africa’s G20 Presidency is aimed at pursuing the objective of fostering solidarity, equality and sustainable development.

“It is South Africa’s firm view that these themes can best be taken forward through the collective actions of institutions like the G20 and various multilateral institutions of the world, especially the United Nations, the WTO [World Trade Organisation] and global financial institutions, which should be reformed and be more representative and responsive to the needs of the citizens of the world.

“We will seek to get the G20 to focus more on how we can enhance solidarity through collective efforts to ensure that in the pursuit of progress for all, no person and no country is left behind,” the President said.

He emphasised that the rights and freedoms of one people cannot be separated from the rights and freedoms of all peoples. The President said that this is the foundation on which solidarity is built.

He said one of the greatest impediments to growth, development and stability is the persistence of inequality within and between countries.

The pursuit of the UN Sustainable Development Goal on reducing inequality is as much of an economic imperative as it is a social imperative, President Ramaphosa said.

“As the G20, we need deliberate and coordinated efforts to focus on inclusive growth based on responsive trade and investment to grow the incomes of poor nations and the poorest in society and to ensure equal access to opportunities, especially for women and young people.

“For nations to flourish, equality and prosperity must be available to everyone – regardless of gender, race, religious beliefs or economic status,” he said.

Mobilising Finance for a Just Energy Transition

Another of South Africa’s priorities for its G20 Presidency is to mobilise finance for a just energy transition.

President Ramaphosa underscored the need for enhanced climate financing, urging global financial institutions to redirect unused Special Drawing Rights to support developing economies, particularly in Africa and the Global South.

“It is simply not fair that over 60% of Special Drawing Rights are concentrated in a handful of wealthy countries. These resources should empower countries in Africa to invest in infrastructure, education, health care, and industrial development,” the President said.

He called for innovative financing mechanisms and private capital to scale sustainable development, urging global institutions to derisk and support financing for emerging markets.

Highlighting South Africa's Just Energy Transition Partnership, the President said: "We must accelerate the transition to low-carbon economies in a manner that is just and inclusive, while recognising the damage that climate change has already caused."

Strengthening disaster resilience

With the increasing frequency of climate-induced natural disasters, President Ramaphosa said South Africa has therefore made the strengthening of disaster resilience one of the priorities of its G20 Presidency.

He called for special financing and insurance mechanisms to support post-disaster reconstruction, particularly in vulnerable regions.

Harnessing critical minerals for inclusive growth

President Ramaphosa said another priority is to harness critical minerals for inclusive growth and development.

"We need a G20 framework on green industrialisation and investments to ensure progress towards a grand bargain that promotes value addition to critical minerals close to the source of extraction.

"We also need the development of low-carbon manufacturing value chains that can support decarbonisation and industrial development. As mineral extraction accelerates to match the needs of the energy transition, the countries and local communities endowed with these resources must be the ones to benefit the most," the President said.

Showcasing Africa's promise

President Ramaphosa highlighted Africa as the next frontier of global growth, with its abundant natural resources, young population and expanding markets.

He called for G20 support for the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Adjustment Fund, investments in infrastructure, youth skills development, and women's economic empowerment.

"The digitisation of the continent to enhance trade and development is a key enabler. Through its G20 Presidency, South Africa is well-positioned to advance global cooperation and build partnerships for growth and development," he said.

Advancing global cooperation

President Ramaphosa praised South Africa's inclusive governance under the Government of National Unity, which he credited with fostering stability and investor confidence.

"This cooperative culture and approach was taken to a higher level with the establishment of the Government of National Unity following the elections we held in May last year.

"The Government of National Unity, made up of 10 political parties, has been vital to stability and inclusive governance, and has contributed to greater interest among investors in South Africa's economic prospects," he said.

The President said over the last few years, the South African government has been working closely with social partners in business and in labour to address key national challenges and drive inclusive growth.

Concluding his address, President Ramaphosa extended an invitation to world leaders to attend the G20 Summit in Johannesburg later this year.

He said the seeds of human progress were sown in Africa, where the earliest forms of cooperation were forged and developed.

"As the leaders of the G20 return to Africa, we make a call that we all harness these essential capabilities that will make us take action to build a better and fairer world. We intend that the G20 in Johannesburg this year should be a forum where cooperation and collaboration amongst the leading economies in the world will be taken to a higher level.

"Acting together, we should build an inclusive, just and equal world in which all may prosper, leaving no one and no country behind. I look forward to welcoming you to the G20 in Johannesburg later this year.

"Even if you do not participate in any of the 130 G20-related meetings, I invite you to come and see South Africa for yourself, the most beautiful country in the world," he said. – Source: SAnews.gov.za



MINISTER LAMOLA EXTENDS CONGRATULATIONS TO MOZAMBIQUE'S MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Minister Lamola has extended his congratulations to Ambassador Maria Manuela dos Santos Lucas on her appointment as Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation for the Republic of Mozambique.

Ambassador Lucas served as Ambassador to South Africa since March 2023 and has been instrumental in deepening South Africa's relations with the Republic of Mozambique.

Minister Lamola stated he looks forward to working with Minister Lucas in order to strengthen the existing strong fraternal relations between the two countries. – Source: www.dirco.gov.za



MINISTER LAMOLA TO HEAR CHALLENGES FACING SOUTH SUDAN'S TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT

The Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Ronald Lamola, arrived in Juba, South Sudan, on Friday, 17 January 2025, to lead a South African Government delegation to address the challenges facing the East African country's transitional government in the lead-up to the 2026 elections.



According to the department, the visit was important, following the decision by the parties involved in the Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS), to extend the mandate of the Revitalised Transitional Government of National Unity (R-TGoNU), until February 2027.

The Ministers and the African Union Commission (AUC) also gained first-hand knowledge of the challenges in implementing the R-ARCSS and assessed the support required to ensure that it is implemented.

The African Union (AU) High-Level Ad hoc Committee for South Sudan (C5) comprises South Africa, Algeria, Chad, Nigeria, and Rwanda.

The C5 has been following developments related to the implementation of the R-ARCSS since its signing in 2018, to end the 2013–2018 South Sudanese civil war.

“During the visit, the ministers met leaders of the government of South Sudan, as well as representatives of regional and international organisations,” the department said.

The meeting included several key figures, including President Salva Kiir Mayardit, First Vice President Dr Riek Machar, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Ramadan Mohammad Abdallah, and Interim Chairperson of the Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (RJMEC), General Charles Tai Gituai.

Other leaders present included Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, Nicholas Haysom, and representatives from the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Monitoring and Verification Mechanism for South Sudan.

During the talks, Rwanda was represented by Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Olivier JP Nduhungirehe, and Algeria was represented by Secretary of State to the Minister of Foreign Affairs Selma Mansouri.

“Chad and Nigeria were represented by their Permanent Representatives in Addis Ababa. Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, represented the AU.” – Source: www.dirco.gov.za

MEDIA ACCREDITATION FOR THE G20 FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING

South Africa will host the meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the Group of Twenty (G20) from 20 to 21 February 2025 in Johannesburg, Gauteng Province. The meeting will take place under the theme: “Solidarity, Equality, Sustainability”.



G20 SOUTH AFRICA 2025

Members of the media wishing to cover the meeting are invited to apply for accreditation. Only *bona fide* media practitioners may apply.

Journalists using passports as identification should note that passports must be valid for at least 30 days beyond the dates of the meeting. At least two pages must be unused.

All fields in the media accreditation form must be filled in. Incomplete forms will not be accepted. The accreditation form is available on <https://g20.org/media-accreditation/>.

The deadline for media accreditation is Friday, 31 January 2025. The deadline will not be extended, and late applications will not be accepted.

For more information on South Africa's Presidency of the G20, please visit the official website, www.g20.org.

Enquiries on the media accreditation process:

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– Source: www.dirco.gov.za

TEAM SOUTH AFRICA HEADS INTO WEF WITH “CONFIDENCE”

Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition Parks Tau says engagements at the World Economic Forum (WEF) Annual Meeting are a platform for South Africa to show that it is addressing the challenges facing the economy and the country.

The Minister was speaking during a media briefing following the pre-WEF Annual Meeting breakfast session held on Thursday, 16 January 2025. The annual meeting will be held from Monday and is expected to conclude on Friday, 24 January 2025.

“I think that there is great prospect for us to ensure that we present the South African story for what it is, not what we hope it is, but what it is.

“And it doesn't suggest that there aren't difficulties in the country. We say we're confronting the difficulties. We're working on resolving the issues of growing the economy and addressing our challenges,” Minister Tau said.

The Minister said the importance of attending the WEF meeting cannot be underestimated in the face of South Africa's ambitions to prop itself up as an investment destination of choice.



“If you look at the individual diaries of the individuals that would be there, it is quite extensive the number of people and influential business and government leaders that would be engaging. [This is] both in terms of our collective engagements with people at Davos, the different platforms that we would be engaging on, but also, in terms of the one-on-one sessions that have been scheduled for individual ministers, CEOs, chairpersons, leaders of parastatals, and so on.

“If you were to quantify the value of the engagements, I think it’s quite extensive because the people that you would be engaging with would be looking at you as a potential investment destination or increasing their investments in the country.

“Those would be one-on-one sessions that are quite invaluable,” he explained.

Team South Africa

The delegation representing South Africa at the annual meeting is expected to be led by President Cyril Ramaphosa, who will be joined by several ministers, civil society, and business leaders.

Speaking at the pre-WEF briefing, leaders in the South African business sector expressed support for Team South Africa heading into the annual meeting.

Standard Bank Chairperson Nonkululeko Nyembezi said the breakfast session with government emphasised the importance of “the alignment between government and business”.

“We stress the fact that it’s not just for government to put across messaging about the country. The business community has a singular responsibility in this regard because we’re talking to our business counterparts, talking the language they understand, telling them how we see our country evolving in our continent over the future.

“The economy is visibly growing and accelerating in that part. Clearly the electricity issue is a foundational element of that, but there are others that we can point to that show that we are getting on top of the issues.

“[But] we’ve got to keep it real; we haven’t solved every single problem, we still have unemployment that is unacceptably high, etc, and those things we can be quite balanced about. footing this time around But I think Team South Africa is striding on far firmer,” Nyembezi said.

Discovery CEO Adrian Gore said South Africa’s showing at the WEF meeting will be “different”.

“I think from a business perspective, I think there is an unequivocal feeling that this year is different. The country is hopefully at a point of inflection. There are tremendous challenges that remain.

“But I think ironically the theme of WEF is collaboration, and, if anything, our country is illustrating that both in the Government of National Unity [and] certainly in the business-government partnership that is a fundamentally powerful construct.

“It’s become a very well-governed structure of cadence and uniqueness and is delivering very, very well to the country. So, there are a number of attributes we feel very confident about going into WEF,” Gore said. – Source: SAnews.gov.za



MINISTER JOHN STEENHUISEN PARTICIPATES IN PANEL DISCUSSION ON BIOECONOMY IN AGRICULTURE AT 17TH GLOBAL FORUM FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

The South African Group of Twenty (G20) Presidency will prioritise bioeconomy policies and developments that encourage actions to address economic growth, environmental protection, and social equity.

Agriculture Minister John Steenhuisen participated in a panel discussion of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) on From Diversity to Action: Global Collaboration to Achieve a Sustainable Bioeconomy in Agriculture at the 17th Global Forum for Food and Agriculture (GFFA) in Berlin, Germany, on 18 January 2025.

Of the three sectors identified as crucial in the South African bioeconomy, agriculture is considered the one with the highest economic impact. The areas in agriculture, which span the full value chain, where bio-innovation can make a significant impact, include crop and livestock improvement for biotic and physical stresses associated with climate change (including indigenous crops); agroprocessing initiatives; an integrated food and nutrition research programme; animal vaccine capabilities; energy crop initiatives; biocontrol and biofertilisers; aquaculture; soil conservation; water resource management; and build high-value skills and capacities to enable agro-innovation.

During its leadership of the G20 in 2024, Brazil developed the G20 Initiative on Bioeconomy (GIB), which led to the adoption of ten high-level principles that have the purpose of informing bioeconomy-relevant policymaking and market development.



The GIB principles focus on normative dimensions, such as social equity, livelihoods, sustainable prosperity, and the need for the bioeconomy to address nature and climate goals. They highlight the need to base the bioeconomy on accurate science, establish common definitions and metrics, and point out the importance of enabling trade rules, financing arrangements, and flows.

Minister Steenhuisen emphasised that as the G20 leader in 2025 and with an existing bioeconomy strategy, South Africa has the opportunity to drive bioeconomy development in line with these principles.

The 2025 GIB will promote anti-poverty and pro-equity goals based on national actions while focusing on regional and international cooperation. South Africa does not stand alone in its commitment as Colombia has committed to prioritising the bioeconomy during its COP-16 Presidency, and Brazil has committed to advancing the bioeconomy theme during its United Nations (UN) Framework Convention on Climate Change COP-30 Presidency.

South Africa's bioeconomy strategy, under the leadership of the Department of Science, Technology and Innovation, has the vision of being a significant contributor to the country's gross domestic product of South Africa by 2030 through the creation and growth of novel industries that generate and develop bio-based services, products, and innovations, with a corresponding increase in the new and existing companies that provide and utilise these solutions.

A thriving bioeconomy has the potential to address South Africa's socio-economic development goals of reducing poverty; enhancing food security; improving South Africa's competitiveness (especially in the industrial and agricultural sectors); creating more jobs; and improving quality of life.

The bioeconomy strategy identified agriculture, health, industry, and the environment as crucial sectors. Under the leadership of the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, South Africa has developed the National Biodiversity Economy Strategy (NBES) in 2014. The strategy is currently being reviewed to include other sectors that rely on biodiversity for business, such as forestry, ecotourism, marine and fisheries, and to align with the vision and principles of the White Paper on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of South Africa's Biodiversity.

The global bioeconomy's value is estimated to be US\$4 trillion, with a growth potential of up to US\$30 trillion by 2050.

The GFFA is the global conference that deals with the future of food and agriculture. It brings together experts, politicians, scientists, businesses, and civil society to develop solutions for future food security. The political highlight is the world's largest informal conference of agriculture ministers. – Source: www.gov.za.

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MINISTER LEON SCHREIBER WELCOMES LATEST HENLEY PASSPORT INDEX RANKING FOR SOUTH AFRICA

The Minister of Home Affairs, Dr Leon Schreiber, welcomes the latest Henley Passport Index, which includes an authoritative global ranking on the power of the passports of different countries.



The latest index shows that the ranking of South Africa's "green mamba" passport increased by 10% between 2024 and 2025. As a result of the increase in the relative strength of the passport, South Africa has broken into the top 50 in the world for the first time in a decade, improving from 53rd in the world in 2024 to 48th at the beginning of 2025.

Minister Schreiber said: "The relative improvement in the strength of the South African passport is only the beginning, as it coincides with the reform process that is underway at Home Affairs, which is built around the digital transformation of all Home Affairs processes. By fully digitalising and closing off to fraud and manipulation the process to obtain enabling documents—including passports—we will significantly enhance the integrity of our documents."

"The latest Henley Passport Index also emphasises the global shift towards digitalising visa processes, a critical component of our reforms. Additionally, the targets proposed by Home Affairs for inclusion in the Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP) that will guide the work of the seventh administration include the introduction of biometric or "e-Passports," that feature an embedded microprocessor chip to authenticate the biometric information of all South African travellers. Our plans to introduce an e-Passport and to digitally secure both document and passport processes for South Africans as well as visa processes for foreigners will combine to meaningfully increase the power of our passport over the coming years." – Source: www.gov.za

SOUTH AFRICA, GEF HOST INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION SEMINAR

The Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment (DFFE), along with the Global Environment Facility (GEF), will host the GEF Expanded Constituency Workshop for the Southern Africa region from 20 to 23 January in Sandton, Johannesburg.

The Deputy Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, Narend Singh, will deliver the opening remarks at the four-day workshop, where 10 participating countries will discuss strategies and opportunities to strengthen environmental actions and generate lasting environmental benefits for people and planet.

The participants include government officials, international agencies, multilateral environmental agreements, and civil society organisations.

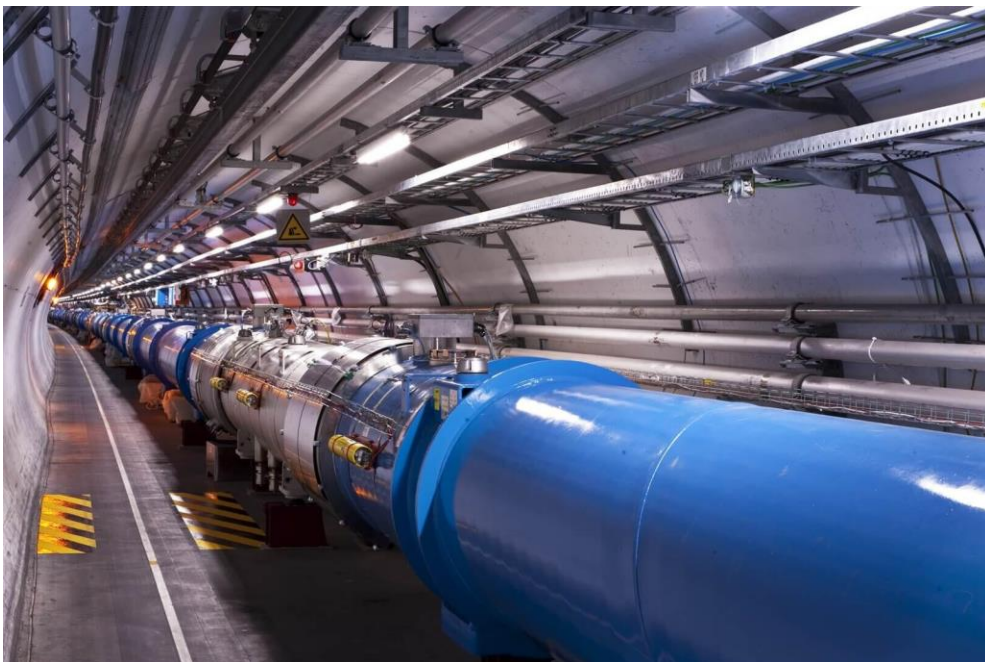


The Expanded Constituency Workshop will focus on the GEF approach on "Integration for Impact", highlighting the importance of unified approaches to invest in global environmental benefits across GEF's focal areas.

The workshop will also include a site visit to a GEF project in South Africa, providing practical insights into the application of integrated strategies.

"During the workshop, the participants will visit the project Building a resilient and resource-efficient Johannesburg: Increased access to urban services and improved quality of life, which is being implemented by the DFFE, the Development Bank of South Africa, and the United Nations Environment Programme with funding by the GEF to promote sustainable urban development," the department said. – Source: SAnews.gov.za

SOUTH AFRICA CELEBRATES 15 YEARS OF COLLABORATION WITH EUROPEAN LAB FOR PARTICLE PHYSICS



The Deputy Minister of Science, Technology and Innovation, Nomalungelo Gina, will reflect on South Africa's 15-year partnership with CERN, the European organisation for nuclear research, in Cape Town this week.

The two-day event, on 20 and 21 January 2025, was held at the National Research Foundation's iThemba Laboratory for Accelerator-Based Science (iThemba-LABS).

It recognised South Africa's contributions to pioneering scientific research and innovation on the global stage.

CERN is the world's largest particle physics laboratory, and the SA-CERN collaboration has fostered advancements in physics, technology, and human capital development.

The SA-CERN programme was officially launched in 2008 and chaired by the late Professor Jean Cleymans.

"The programme has built on the rich history of experimental science in South Africa, increasing the local and international footprint of the country in high-energy physics and facilitating South African researchers, engineers, and students' access to CERN's Large Hadron Collider in Geneva," the statement read. – Source: SAnews.gov.za

CALL TO ENTER SADC MEDIA AWARDS COMPETITION

South African journalists are invited to submit their entries for the 2025 Southern African Development Community (SADC) Media Awards competition before the deadline next month.

The competition is open to journalists from the SADC Member States.

"The SADC Media Awards were established in 1996 to recognise the best media work in disseminating information on SADC to support the process of regional cooperation and integration in the region.

"To promote regional integration and cooperation (cross-border issues), the awards aim to recognise excellence in journalism in the area of print, photo, television, and radio as well as to encourage media practitioners in member states to cover issues pertaining to the region," the Government Communications (GCIS) said on Tuesday, 21 January 2025.



The first prize winners will receive their prizes and certificates on the margins of the SADC Summit of Heads of State and Government that will take place in August 2025.

The first prize winner in each category receives US\$2500, and the runner-up receives US\$1000.

Journalists who wish to enter the competition can access more information about the competition from the www.gcis.gov.za website. – Source: SAnews.gov.za

QATAR AIRWAYS EXPERIENCES RECORD-BREAKING FESTIVE SEASON IN SOUTH AFRICA

Qatar Airways has recorded unprecedented passenger numbers to and from Africa during the recent festive season. Qatar Airways has had its busiest festive season ever in South Africa as it marked 20 years of service to the country.



In the two weeks between 22 December 2024 and 6 January 2025, Qatar Airways moved 84 000 passengers to and from Africa—a near 100% increase from the same period in 2019-2020 before the COVID-19 pandemic.

“For this milestone to come at a time when we are also marking our 20th year of flying to South Africa makes it even more special. For two decades now, we have endeavoured to build a strong, lasting relationship with South Africa, including by being a reliable partner to the country during the pandemic, and we are keen to help further foster the country’s bright economic future and remain dedicated to contributing to its exciting growth ahead, including through our partnership and investment with Airlink.” Qatar Airways Chief Commercial Officer, Mr Thierry Antinori, said.

20 years in South Africa

To celebrate the airline's milestone anniversary, travellers from South Africa are also able to fly to more than 170 destinations through the world's best airport, Hamad International Airport, with discounted tickets. Between 15 to 22 January 2025, up to 20% discount is available to mark 20 years of unparalleled service.

The airline currently serves Johannesburg, Cape Town, and Durban with up to 33 weekly flights. Qatar Airways first flew to South Africa on 16 January 2005, when it opened routes to Johannesburg and Cape Town.

Since then, the airline has seen passenger demand grow strongly, with flights between Cape Town and Johannesburg moving from 60-75% capacity in 2019 to 90% in the last 12 months. – Source: www.sapeople.com

MEETINGS AFRICA 2025: A MASSIVE REVENUE BOOSTER FOR GAUTENG

Meetings Africa 2025—now in its 19th year—looks set to make another significant contribution to Gauteng and Johannesburg's revenue, having contributed around R420 million (€21.7 million) to the coffers last year.

A total of R215 million (€11.1 million) directly benefitted Johannesburg's economy, while the event also bolstered Gauteng's gross domestic product by approximately R275 million (€14.2 million) and supported 563 jobs within the province.

This year's Meetings Africa will again be at Johannesburg's Sandton Convention Centre from 24 to 26 February 2025. Organisers expect further growth on the 2024 figures.

With media and visitor registrations now open and exhibitor and buyer registrations launched in November 2024, there has already been strong interest, said Bjorn Hufkie, General Manager: Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions (MICE) Sales at South Africa National Convention Bureau, a business unit of South African Tourism.

New buyer segments

Since registration opened, a total of 278 buyer applications from 57 countries have been received, including representation from South Africa's core source markets. "All buyers are rigorously vetted by a recognised international company, ensuring high-quality connections that foster meaningful business opportunities for African exhibitors," explained Hufkie.

For the first time this year, Meetings Africa 2025 has partnered with the Council of Event Professionals Africa (CEPA) to introduce certified CEPA members as local and regional buyers.

This initiative supports engagement between small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and key stakeholders across the continent, promoting inclusive economic growth and expanding networking opportunities.

"Small and medium-sized enterprises are the engines of Africa's economy," noted Hufkie. "By connecting SMEs with influential buyers and stakeholders, Meetings Africa is driving growth and ensuring that opportunities in the business events sector are shared equitably across the continent."

"Powerful platform"

Hufkie pointed out that Meetings Africa is a well-established trade platform with a proven history of delivering exceptional return on investment for buyers and exhibitors. "Meetings Africa is more than just a trade exhibition; it is a powerful platform to showcase the talent, creativity, and opportunities that Africa's business events sector has to offer.

"This year's expanded offerings reflect the vibrant and dynamic growth of our industry across the continent. We are proud that our nation plays host to such a prestigious event, and we look forward to showcasing Africa's finest to the world. It's a wonderful opportunity to connect with our neighbouring countries from across our continent."

Ongoing partnership with ICCA

The collaboration between Meetings Africa and the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) continues to elevate the event's global impact, according to Hufkie.

The international association sector is crucial for economic growth on the continent, fostering innovation through knowledge sharing and driving sector growth by attracting investments and forming strategic partnerships.

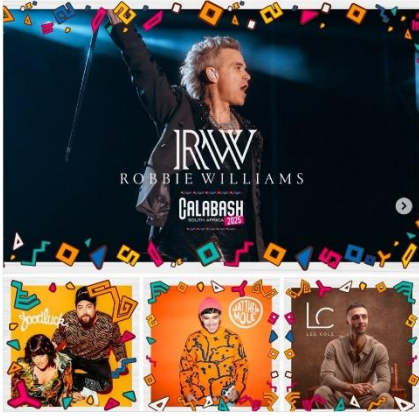
"Our partnership with ICCA ensures Meetings Africa remains at the forefront of global trends, driving real economic impact for Africa," said Hufkie. "Together, we are showcasing the continent's potential and creating a legacy of innovation, collaboration and growth.

"Meetings Africa plays a critical role in advancing Africa's business events sector, driving infrastructure development and positioning the continent as a global hub for innovation and business tourism." – Source: www.tourismupdate.co.za

CALABASH FESTIVAL HITS CAPE TOWN THIS WEEK

The Calabash South Africa 2025 festival is set to happen at Cape Town's DHL Stadium on 22 and 23 January 2025.





Pop sensation Robbie Williams and world-renowned rock band Green Day will perform at the Calabash festival, spanning over two days, along with a line-up of local artists. Robbie Williams will kick off day one as the headline act. Other artists who will perform on 22 January include GoodLuck, Matthew Mole, and Lee Cole.

This is the second Calabash festival after its inaugural event in 2024. Last year's festival featured Maroon 5 and Meduza.

Green Day, a Grammy-winning trio with a three-decade legacy, will be performing in South Africa for the first time on the second day of the festival. The punk rock band The Offspring and the local rock band Fokopolisiekar will join them.

– Source: www.sapeople.com

CAPE TOWN INTERNATIONAL JAZZ FESTIVAL TO DAZZLE IN 2025

The iconic Cape Town International Jazz Festival (CTIJF) is set to make an unforgettable return to the Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC) on 25 and 26 April 2025.

Widely celebrated as Africa's Grandest Gathering, this year's festival promises a bigger and more exhilarating experience, featuring over 30 world-class artists and an exclusive world-first musical collaboration that will captivate music lovers across the globe.

The festival coincides with Freedom Day on 27 April, making it a fitting celebration of the nation's hard-fought freedom, which has opened South African music to the international stage and allowed the country to showcase its finest talent.

Festival organisers, espAfrika, promised to deliver another unforgettable festival experience with a carefully curated line-up reflecting the diversity of the audience, ensuring something for everyone to enjoy.

Since its inception in 2000, the CTIJF has established itself as one of the premier music festivals on the African continent. Held annually, it transforms Cape Town into a vibrant hub of musical creativity and cultural celebration, drawing thousands of local and international visitors.

The CTIJF is also a significant economic driver for the Western Cape.

According to research conducted by North West University's Tourism Research in Economics, Environs and Society unit, the 2024 festival generated approximately R119 million in economic activity while creating between 444 and 1200 jobs in the region.

This includes employment in event management, technical production, security, catering, and hospitality services, reaffirming the festival's impact on both the cultural and economic landscape of Cape Town.

The 2025 edition is set to raise the bar with several exciting additions, including a world-class festival collaboration to be unveiled closer to the event, a brand-new culinary experience featuring a diverse range of local and international flavours to tantalise festivalgoers, and exclusive hospitality lounges with luxurious spaces.

The much-anticipated Free Concert returns on the eve of the festival, allowing locals to experience world-class jazz without cost, reinforcing the festival's commitment to accessibility and community spirit.

Additionally, the CTIJF Masterclasses will continue to inspire the next generation of artists. Featuring both local and international musicians, these workshops offer invaluable learning experiences for aspiring talent and jazz enthusiasts alike.

The festival's unique blend of jazz, soul, funk, blues, and fusion continues to attract both jazz purists and modern music lovers, making it a must-attend event for all. – Source: www.iol.co.za



SOUTH AFRICA SECURES HISTORIC PODIUM AT DAKAR 2025

South Africa is celebrating a moment of pure pride as Henk Lategan and Brett Cummings from Toyota Gazoo Racing South Africa stormed to a historic second-place finish at the 2025 Dakar Rally, conquering the world's toughest race and proving that South African talent shines on the global stage.



This monumental achievement is more than just a win; it is a story of perseverance, precision, and pure determination.

The duo delivered an outstanding performance, only bested by Saudi Arabia's own Yazeed Al-Rajhi, who claimed first place in a privately entered Overdrive Toyota Hilux. Al-Rajhi had the crowd on their feet, but Lategan and Cummings ensured South Africa's flag flew high on the podium. Securing a spot on the Dakar podium is no ordinary feat. It represents years of preparation, a deep understanding of the vehicle, an incredible team, and a bond between driver and co-driver that can only be described as extraordinary.

Adding to the celebration, six of the top 10 cars, including that of the winner, were built right here in South Africa. The four Toyotas, crafted by SVR (formerly Hallspeed), and the two Century Racing vehicles showcased the unmatched engineering talent of South Africa's motorsport industry.

The outpouring of support from fans has been heartwarming, with social media buzzing with messages of admiration.

"Congratulations! Amazing achievement and the best teamwork I've seen in many years. Well done to every single person involved."

"Well done to #TGRSA. Henk and Brett, you made us proud. We salute you. Congratulations on your second place; you've worked hard for it. Next year is yours for the taking."

Toyota Gazoo Racing South Africa also joined in the celebrations, sharing on their official social media: "A massive congratulations to the entire #TGRSA team and to Henk Lategan and Brett Cummings for making the podium at Dakar 2025! An incredible effort from everyone involved—what an unforgettable rally!"

The Dakar Rally, often referred to as the "world's toughest race," spans thousands of kilometres across some of the most unforgiving terrain on the planet. This year's edition saw competitors battling sand dunes, rocky landscapes, and extreme weather conditions in the Middle East. With each stage testing not only speed but strategy and stamina, it is a race where survival alone is an achievement.

For Lategan and Cummings, navigating these challenges with finesse speaks volumes about their capabilities. Their Toyota Hilux endured everything the desert threw at it, proving the vehicle's reliability and their unshakeable focus.

This achievement is more than a victory—it's a bold statement of South Africa's motorsport excellence, inspiring a nation to dream bigger, strive harder, and face challenges with unrelenting courage. – Source: www.goodthingsguy.com

SOUTH AFRICA WIN WOMEN'S U19 WORLD CUP OPENER

South Africa opened their Under-19 Women's T20 World Cup campaign with a 22-run victory over New Zealand at the Borneo Cricket Ground in Malaysia. The game was reduced to 11 overs per side, following a delayed start due to wet conditions.

New Zealand won the toss and elected to field, but South Africa made the most of their time at the crease.

Openers Jemma Botha and Simoné Lourens laid a solid foundation with a 52-run partnership. Botha top-scored with 32 runs, while Lourens contributed 21.

The momentum was further boosted by Karabo Meso, who smashed a quickfire 25 off just 14 deliveries, propelling South Africa to a competitive total of 91-7 in their allotted overs.

In response, South Africa's disciplined bowling attack ensured the target was out of reach for New Zealand.

Monalisa Legodi was the pick of the bowlers, delivering an exceptional spell with figures of 2-8, while Kayla Reyneke provided crucial support, claiming 2-15. New Zealand was restricted to 69-5, falling short by 22 runs.

Botha, named Player of the Match for her vital innings, reflected on the significance of the game and her preparation:

"Switching to a shorter format after the rain delay required quick adaptation. I focused on staying mentally engaged and keeping the team's goal at the forefront.

"It is a proud moment to contribute to the team's success in the opening game of the World Cup and to be part of history, playing and winning the first-ever match at this new venue." – Source: www.teamsa.co.za



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