



tourism

Department:
Tourism
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Honorable Premier

Honorable MEC from North West and Mpumalanga

Management of Amadeus IT Group

CEO of the Hotel Schools

Government Officials

Members of the Media

Students

Ladies and Gentleman

Since the beginning of this decade, many of Africa's economies have grown faster and more consistently. One reason is the rapidly increasing demand for Africa's exports. Another is generally better governance. Investors are taking a fresh look at many African countries. However, at least 300 million Africans are still very poor, and Africa will need to grow a lot faster and sustain that growth. There is much work to be done.

Businesses which trade throughout Africa every day tend to be more in touch with the realities of doing business in Africa. So we are in business, but there are skeptics – maybe even cynics - who feel that Africa should be consigned to the waste basket of history. However, execution is crucial. Too many excellent initiatives in Africa lose drive, focus and ownership once the report is written or agreement signed, we need to overcome that.

However, I am delighted that the Amadeus IT group together with the Spanish Government is making the accelerated effort to connect with South Africa and assist her, in confronting its woes. But it's important not only to achieve these changes but to spread the good news.

We do appreciate the role that we have assumed internationally, to change perceptions of Africa or rather South Africa. If you look at the international media, you can easily get the impression that Africa is a single Country dominated by war and famine. While we don't plan to deny or minimize Africa's problems, we need more people to recognize Africa's diversity of challenge and opportunity.

Put concisely, if we want to protect our own prosperity we had better be part of the attack on poverty, poverty of resource, hope and opportunity. That could be achieved through tourism. We need to utilize 2010 as a catalyst. It should be noted that the World Cup has put South Africa on the World map and we cannot afford to lose the opportunity to leverage on the attention given to us at the moment.

We are consciously aware that our tourism momentum will not remain sustainable if our connectivity to business is not anchored around the pillars that conform to the global competitiveness process that is marketing, product development, and information management.

As leadership of this country, bestowed with the responsibility to address poverty alleviation we need to vigorously do the following

- To drive country broad-based participation of civil society,
- To be result-oriented and focused on outcomes that benefit the poor based on a long term perspective for poverty reduction,
- To comprehensively address the multidimensional nature of poverty and the policies needed to reduce it and critical
- To be partnership oriented, involving all stakeholders and our foreign partners, like Amadeus Group.

The evolution of development policies within the international community and the identification of target groups provide a background against which to measure progress, if any and to evaluate current practice which might be at variance with professed objectives or simply inadequate or even misconceived. In this regard, the development of the concept of 'poverty alleviation' was a result of disillusionment with 'trickle-down' theories of the 1960s. These supposed that development at the National level would automatically improve the well-being of all sections of the population. Experience however, showed that even in those cases in the Third World where growth occurred, by and large it did not benefit the poor. Especially in sub-Saharan African, not only have the economies stagnated since the end of the 1960s but also the number of people who live in absolute poverty increased rapidly. It is therefore incumbent on us as leadership to deal with this pandemic.

A Nationally coordinated framework of action in close collaboration with the local governments and other stakeholders to consolidate on the previous achievements and build a solid foundation for the attainment of the county's long-term vision of becoming the largest and strongest South African economy and a key player in the world economy, it is a must .

We need to begin, to reform the way government works and its institutions, a goal geared towards re-professionalizing and strengthening government and public institutions to deliver effective services to the people. We need to identify segments that we know will yield returns in the short and long term.

As for the student, you are now faced with the struggle for economic development and it's upon you as leaders of tomorrow that you take this opportunity and ensure that it benefits the society at large. South African hotel managers are highly sought after, especially by developed countries as they are highly regarded, one of the major challenges facing the industry is not only to provide training to upcoming entrepreneurs who are starting businesses such as guesthouses, but also to provide them with business opportunities. Take this opportunity and run with it. This because the skills

required today may not be the same, as those required ten years from now. Constant training is essential.

To the Amadeus Management, South Africa is internally grateful for the opportunity and we commit to ensure that this programme becomes a success. Your generous gesture will have a major impact on the development of our students and the community at large. I am confident that some of the students with the skills they are going to inquire will be entrepreneurs when they leave these institutions.

I thank you