

The business of African infrastructure

Africa is a continent experiencing a positive growth rate of more than 5% annually over the past decade and as such provides attractive opportunities for business to invest. To sustain the economic transformation occurring across the continent, the role of private sector involvement cannot be ignored and is pivotal to this process.

Developing adequate and efficient infrastructure will assist African economies to increase productivity in manufacturing and service delivery. There are huge investment opportunities in Africa, especially in infrastructure, where the benefits are expected to be high.

In particular, Africa's absolute and relative lack of infrastructure points to the existence of untapped productive potential, which could be unlocked through scaling up investments in the various sectors. Notably, infrastructure plays a central role in improving competitiveness, facilitating domestic and international trade, and enhancing the continent's integration into the global economy.

As it stands, World Bank statistics show that an amount of \$93 billion is required annually until 2020 to tackle the issue of infrastructure development in Africa. It is therefore crucial to open opportunities to attract new investors as well as explore new mechanisms for financing infrastructure in Africa.

With a population of more than 1 billion people in Africa, it is imperative that all influential stakeholders get together and debate the prospect. Less than 40% of the continent's people have access to electricity, about a third of the rural population have access to roads, and only 5% of agriculture is under irrigation. The annual Infrastructure Africa Business Forum exists so that challenges that impact Africa's growth can be discussed, and this would give birth to solutions and timelines to see the blockages to infrastructure development in Africa steadily eradicated and the opportunity for business involvement realised.

The Infrastructure Africa Business Forum will take place from 16-17 July 2013 at the Sandton Convention Centre, Johannesburg, South Africa. The partners to the forum include; The NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency, The NEPAD Business Foundation, The African Development Bank and Africa Project Access.

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