

Africa and Europe's biggest business heavy hitters set to gather in Johannesburg for 'Southern Africa Europe CEO Dialogue'

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Some of Africa and Europe's biggest blue chip business leaders will convene in Johannesburg this month to unlock economic opportunities in high-growth sectors at the 8th edition of the high-powered 'Southern Africa Europe CEO Dialogue'.



Organised by The European House - Ambrosetti, N.1 Think Tank in Italy, N.4 in Europe and among the top 20 globally, in collaboration with the Gauteng Province, GGDA and a number of international public and private stakeholders, including ABSA, Italian Trade Agency, Terna, CLN-MA, Finstone, BBM Law, ASPEN, Italtile, Brand SA and Emilia Romagna Region, the event will take place in a hybrid format on **25-26 November 2021** in Sandton, Johannesburg, at The Capital on Park.

The CEO's and top management of major African and European multinationals, such as Vodacom, SASOL, Old Mutual, BNP Paribas, Eni, Siemens, DHL, Transnet, Eskom, Enel Green Power, Italian State Railways, Saint-Gobain, Bolloré Logistics and CNH have been past participants of the Dialogue between Southern Africa and by a long way the region's biggest

trade partner, Europe.

Just some of the dialogue's confirmed participants this year include: Wamkele Mene, Secretary-General, African Continental Free Trade Area; Italy's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Marina Sereni; South Africa's Reserve Bank Governor, Lesetja Kganyago; Siemens Africa CEO, Sabine dall'Omo; Old Mutual Chairman, Trevor Manuel; Angola's Minister of Finance, Vera Daves de Sousa; Gauteng Premier, David Makhura; Qatar Airways Group CEO, Akbar Al Baker; United Nations Under-Secretary General and Special Adviser on Africa, Christina Duarte; the Governor of Italy's Emilia-Romagna Region, Stefano Bonaccini; the CEO of Enel Green Power, Salvatore Bernabei; the President of the World Farmers' Organisation, Theo De Jager; and the Managing Director of the recently-formed Stellantis group's SA operations, Leslie Ramsoomar.

The Head of African Affairs at The European House - Ambrosetti, Pietro Mininni, says Africa offers unique opportunities due to the recent implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area, the largest free trade area in the world, connecting almost 1.3 billion people across 54 countries with a combined GDP of roughly \$3.4tn.

“At The European House - Ambrosetti we are strongly convinced that Africa occupies a particularly significant and important position on the regional and international stage. Many unfairly believe that Africa will be the continent of future economic opportunities; instead we are convinced that it is the place to be today, the continent of present opportunities,” says Mininni.

The Southern Africa Europe CEO Dialogue has as its express goal promoting strong and stable dialogue and supporting the long-term growth of strategic trade and economic relations between Europe and Southern Africa.

Some of the topics to be covered at the 2021 Southern Africa Europe CEO Dialogue are:

- The business outlook and impacts of the African Continental Free Trade Area: challenges and opportunities.
- CEO's views on African business.
- Building pharmaceutical hubs across Africa: the importance of cross border partnerships.
- The energy transition and the commodities market in Southern Africa.

- Sharing experience and technology to foster competitiveness and sustainability in agri-business.

The Summit is held annually in South Africa, but The European House - Ambrosetti is constantly collaborating with an international Advisory Board to identify new business opportunities, priority themes and sectors to analyse future strategic developments in continental value chains.

Since 2019 the event has been enriched by the contents and activities of the Community CEO – African Chapter, an exclusive Club of top business leaders whose aim is to foster maximum interaction between leading entrepreneurs operating in Southern Africa and build strong and lasting relationships between its members and high-level external guests participating in the annual programme. Among the past speakers: Investec CEO, Fani Titi; Zimbabwe's President, Emmerson Mnangagwa; AngloAmerican CEO, Mark Cutifani; Wits Vice Chancellor, Adam Habib; Nando's founder, Robert Brozin; New GX Capital CEO, Khudusela Pitje; and Thebe Chairman, Nhlanhla Nene.

“The past two years have been nothing short of a socio-economic whirlwind for the world. The socio-economic impacts of the Corona virus pandemic have compelled us to radically shift thinking, behaviour and outlook on how we work and relate as societies. Inevitably this disruption has severely impacted our economies, causing major regression in fighting unemployment, poverty and class inequalities. The inequality gap, more especially in South Africa is more vivid and demands salient solutions to mitigate an economic meltdown. However, we must equally acknowledge that historically, each crisis has served as a catalyst towards a radical shift towards a more progressive direction or a way to bring global leaders together, finding innovative ways to reignite our economies,” says the CEO of the Gauteng Growth Development Agency, Musa Tshabalala.

“It is within this background that I am excited about the upcoming Southern Africa Europe CEO Dialogue, taking place in Gauteng. For us the conference cannot have taken place at a more critical time where the Gauteng province is bestowed with the mammoth responsibility of resuscitating the economy, ensuring that we reinforce and develop the participation of Small Medium enterprises,” Tshabalala added.

This edition of the Southern Africa Europe CEO Dialogue will be enhanced with side events on the themes “Joburg Hour”, “Renewables in South Africa”, “The Constitution of South Africa” and “SME's and Inclusive Economy”.

Furthermore, a Business Intelligence Round Table on “Italy and Zambia challenges and opportunities in the mining sector in the Copperbelt province” will take place on 29 November in Kitwe, Zambia.

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