

I wish to take this opportunity of thanking the organisers of the Gulf Industry Forum for having given me the privilege of attending and participating in this important event.

I have no doubt in my mind that this forum will contribute positively towards sustained economic growth in the gulf and hopefully also in the Africa continent.

I see my participation in this forum of sharing ideas in contributing towards a better world for all. The Middle East and most specifically the Gulf is an important economic region as it occupies a unique geopolitical position in the tricontinental hub of Europe, Asia and Africa.

It is the source of 67% of the world's petroleum reserves and commands two of the most strategically important waterways in the world, namely the Arabian Gulf and the Red Sea, giving access to the Asian hinterland via the Gulf of Aqaba.

South Africa is committed to lead and facilitate sustainable economic activity in our country as well as in the African continent. We intend to achieve this objective by:

- Increasing the contribution of small enterprise to the economy.
- Building skills, technology and infrastructure platforms from which enterprise can benefit.
- Increasing market access opportunities for and export South African goods and services.
- Increasing the overall level of direct investment, especially in priority areas.
- Contributing towards the economic growth and development of the African continent within the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).
- Integral to innovation and market access is our investment promotion and facilitation that is linked to the Nejiwal Industrial Policy Framework as it focuses on identifying and promoting specific investment opportunities in niche sectors, regions and products rather than taking a generic approach to marketing South Africa.

One of the challenges that post apartheid South Africa experienced since 1994, was of repositioning South Africa globally and to integrate our economy with the international community. I would like to think that we have, as a government created an enabling environment by the policy and programme developments in international trade development that includes:

- SACU – EFTA Free Trade agreement
- Concluding Free Trade Agreement with MERSOSUR
- PTA with India
- BNCs with other governments
- Participating in the Doha Round of Negotiation of WTO

South Africa has a strong developmental focus in its engagement with Africa. I raise this point as it will give participants an opportunity to join us in the opportunities we have identified. South Africa's economy is inextricably linked to Southern Africa (SADC) and the region's economic prospect is linked to the economic recovery of the African continent. I will speak a little more on NEPAD later.

The areas we have identified and prioritised for market innovation and new products are:

- Infrastructure and logistics
- energy
- ICT
- Water and Waste Management
- Transport
- Construction
- Oil and Gas Infrastructure
- Agribusiness
- Mining
- Human Resources Development

I encourage you as we have been encouraging meetings of the World Economic Forum to take advantage of the mega investment opportunities in the region.

As I have mentioned earlier in my presentation, South Africa is committed to facilitate and implement the objectives of NEPAD.

Fundamental in our strategy is to push back the frontiers of poverty. In this regard, trade and economic development in the continent, we believe plays a key component in alleviating poverty. Nepad, the Programme of Action for Africa's recovery recognises the need for infrastructure, industrial and skills development. We emphasize that NEPAD will contribute to the continent's ability to become fully integrated into the global economy.

It might also be useful to mention that the other vehicles through which the continental developmental agenda is advised are through South-South Co-operation initiatives such as the New Asian African Strategic Partnership. The acceleration of South –South trade and investment is one of the most significant features of recent developments in the global economy. This does not, however preclude North-South Co-operation where developed and developing countries work in partnership to address Africa's developmental needs.

After having scanned our vision for the development of the African continent, allow me to return to the National Industrial Participation Programme (NIPP) in South Africa in order that business may identify sectors within which it would like to enter into.

The NIPP is focused on sectoral action plans. These sectoral plans lead to market innovation and new products. They are as follows:

- Capital/Transport Equipment and Metals.
- Automotive and Components.
- Chemicals, Plastic fabrication and pharmaceuticals.
- Forestry, Pulp and Paper and furniture.

NIPP investments have allowed major new injections of technology and skills transfer into South Africa.

We have successfully taken raw materials and moved them up the value chain. Mined gold is being turned into jewellery and base metals are used to produce alloys. The NIPP has opened entirely new markets, sometimes with unique new products.

Partnership projects arising out of the NIPP range from the manufacture of oil rigs for the international market to trading opportunities in the nuclear energy fields.

South Africa has developed an established and diversified manufacturing base that had demonstrated resilience and the potential to compete in a global economy. I will contend that there remains a great space for market innovation and new products, both in South Africa and the African continent.

I hope I have wet your appetite to consider South Africa and the African continent a possible trade and investment destination that you may want to consider in the not too distant future.

I can continue by speaking in greater detail of the opportunities that have come about as a result of climate changes and the benefit to both business and the environment.

This, I believe is a discussion for another Forum.

Once again, thank you and God bless.