

South Africa

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BRICS gateway to Africa

South Africa, the newest BRICS member, will host the fifth annual summit at Durban ICC

South Africa, its government, people and businesses are extending a very warm welcome to leaders and delegations of the BRICS economies as they gather in Durban for their 5th annual summit on March 25-27 to discuss "BRICS and Africa—Partnerships for integration and industrialization."

As it was when it hosted one of the most memorable soccer world cups in history in 2010, all eyes will be on Africa's most sophisticated nation as leaders discuss the promotion of African infrastructure development, the establishment of a BRICS-led development bank, a BRICS think-tank and a BRICS Business Council.

As the newest country to join the world's booming emerging-economy club of Brazil, Russia, India and China, South Africa couldn't be more ready or pleased to be hosting the event.

The most developed economy in Africa, contributing a third of the continent's GDP, South Africa boasts huge attractions for investors and visitors alike. With extensive mineral wealth, cosmopolitan cities,

is flying the flag for the whole continent.

China-South Africa ties

In 2009, China became South Africa's leading trade partner. By the following year, trade between the two countries had reached \$25.6 billion, with imports from South Africa reaching \$14.8 billion. Cross-country investment had grown to \$7 billion in the same year and China's investment in South Africa continues to grow.

Increasingly the South African government, inspired by China's success in reducing poverty and promoting economic growth, is looking to China for ideas and inspiration. In return, it offers a huge number of opportunities, particularly in the fields of transport, energy and state-owned enterprises.

South Africa's transport system is, without a doubt, the best developed in Africa. With good roads and highways that link the cities and other countries in the region, extensive air connections, rail transport that continues to modernize and

Enterprises to China. We do not see our engagement with China as an extractive engagement where raw materials are just sourced with no reciprocal development in South Africa.

"In the second half of that year, I led a delegation as the deputy minister of public enterprises to China and we met with the major company in charge of the North-South rail network and other companies responsible for road and rail infrastructure. We met with the entire spectrum and the message we took there was one of mutual respect."

Within the BRICS context, the transport minister says: "We want to bring in the interests of the entire African continent as much as possible. We do not take our BRICS involvement lightly — it comes with many responsibilities."

"We do not see ourselves as the arrogant big brother, but as a facilitator, a country that seeks to enable and as a country that seeks to improve its entire continental neighborhood. It is worth highlighting that the airport company of South Africa is presently assisting Brazil in terms of developing a major airport there."

Powering the future

Energy is another crucial sector for Africa's development, and another area that boasts abundant opportunities, increasingly in the green and renewable energy segment. China, which has recently been praised for its investments in alternative energies, is especially attractive to South Africa in terms of knowledge sharing and technology, as well as infrastructural investment.

As Energy Minister E. Dipuo Peters explained: "We have a policy that 35 percent of new power must be generated by independent power producers, which creates the necessary space for international players."

"The highlight for me of the BRICS summit would be finding a way to address the issues related to funding models for infrastructure development so we can interconnect with the Southern African Development Community and the rest of the country. I believe there should be more talk about tangible



PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

BRICS leaders at last year's summit.

products and projects as opposed to frameworks and research proposals. In this sense, we need to take lessons from other BRICS countries and see how we can collaborate with them.

"Opportunities for partnership are central to the success of the BRIC summit, as it is a grouping which should be primarily aimed at improving the economic development of our respective countries."

Malusi Gigaba, minister of public enterprises, who bears responsibility for South Africa's state-owned companies such as South African Airways, said:

"People must view Africa as a continent of great potential and pos-

sibility, where you will find everything that is lacking elsewhere in the world, such as human resources, growth potential, natural resources and the humanity of our people. Nature has been kind to us, we have kept our wild animals and wildlife, and yet we also have bustling urban centers.

"We are not just about safaris and poverty however. We are a productive continent and investing in Africa will do you a big favor. It will extend your revenue stream into a region that has a young and burgeoning middle class."

The Durban International Convention Center (ICC), one of the

most advanced conference facilities in the world, is delighted to be playing host to the BRICS summit.

As well as being named Africa's Leading Conference Center for the 11th year by the World Travel Awards, the ICC is also recognized as one of the top 20 conference centers in the world.

Julie-May Ellingson, CEO of the ICC said: "We need to leverage from events such as the BRICS and follow up on our own promotion. We also need to encourage the interaction of local and foreign businesses during the summit."

InFocus provided the story

We want to bring the interests of the entire African continent to the BRICS summit."

BEN MARTINS, MINISTER OF TRANSPORT

the world's largest and most famous national park (Kruger), thousands of kilometers of coastline, and world-famous wines, the country of 51.7 million has much to be proud of, but it also faces the challenges of social inequality and high unemployment. However, as the gateway to Africa and its billion potential customers, South Africa is ready to shine.

The decision to bring the proud nation into the BRICS was a surprising one for many. At the time of admission, in 2011, South Africa's GDP was one-sixteenth of China's. But, as the world's fourth-largest producer of gold and diamonds, and with more than three-quarters of the Earth's platinum wealth, the country is a fierce contender for increased growth and prosperity. South Africa

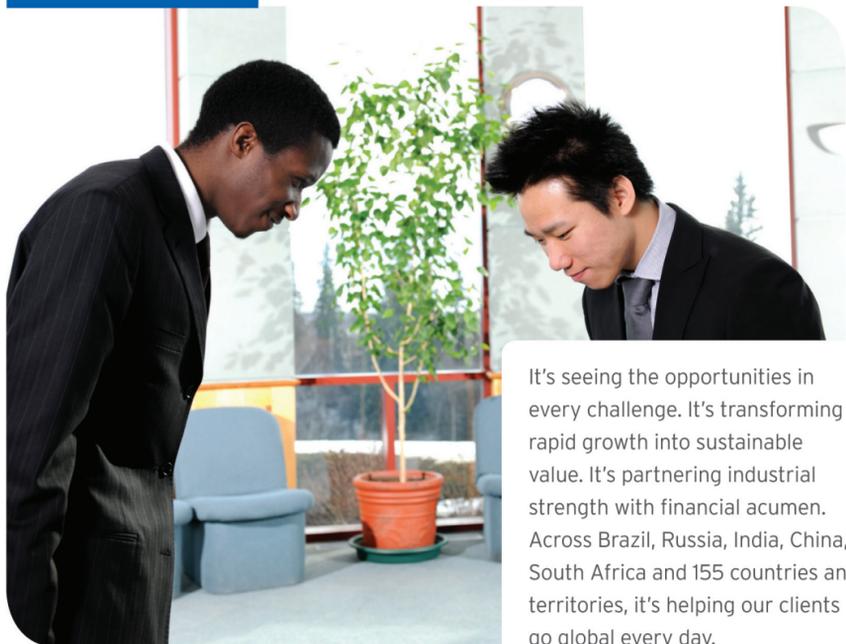
grow, and a maritime sector that is well equipped to serve as a transshipment hub, South Africa is excellently connected.

As Minister of Transport Ben Martins explained, "during a state visit by President Jacob Gedleyihlekisa Zuma to China in 2010, a protocol was devised that speaks to all areas of trade and industry between the two countries, including development in manufacturing, and investment and participation in infrastructure development."

"Any foreign company coming to invest in South Africa is encouraged to promote job creation and skills transfer so that locals benefit."

"The 2010 visit was followed up in 2011 by a visit of the Deputy President and the Minister of Public

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