

Connecting Africa: Transport Infrastructure conference: Cape Town South Africa, 20th - 22nd October 2014

Infrastructure construction plays a key role in developing the national economy, increasing the standard of peoples' material and cultural life, creating jobs and attracting foreign investment. Which is why, organizations will have to understand the implications, challenges, opportunities and risk pertaining to infrastructure investment in order to successfully implement and execute large scale projects efficiently.

Howard Rosen was one of the international speakers at the Connecting Africa: Transport Infrastructure conference which was held on the 20th to 22nd October 2014 in African Pride 15 on Orange Hotel, Cape Town, South Africa. The three days conference aimed to address the enormous infrastructure deficit whilst unlocking investment opportunities in this emerging market.

“The most important issue for investors is certainty. They need to be clear as to what kind of returns they can expect from investment in infrastructure, whether it be for road, rail or other modes of transportation and, it has to be said, in Africa there is always an issue of political risk. What is important in this context is to recognise also that a clear set of local legal rules will be essential.” said Howard Rosen, Chairman of Rail Working Group, Switzerland.

He added that Transportation is a core element of economic growth and as a result not only inevitably will there be a resource gap but, to take my specialist area, rail investment, in many cases, requires a leap of faith where the economic case for building infrastructure will be created as the build progresses, responding to expected future demand rather than fulfilling current demand.

According to another presenter of the conference Anouj Mehta, Advisor — Infrastructure and PPPs of The World Bank, Geneva and Advisor to the Government of India, the conference is extremely important for Africa at a critical juncture in time. Private sector companies, international money and investors are faced with a multitude of choices in terms of where to go and are coming off a period of slowdown in the world and gradual return to positivism. They are therefore looking anew for new opportunities and markets and interest in Africa is at a peak right now. This need to be captured with both private sector and governments seeing the opportunities in Africa as well as the models that have been undertaken in other developing countries such as India and which can be also implemented in Africa. The conference can be the knowledge forum for this but should also be seen as that start of a series of activities directly starting from knowledge sharing to going towards actual capacity building programmes, projects pipeline development and other follow on activities.

Other speakers include Peter Copley, Regional Co-ordinator of South African Road Federation; Gorman Zimba, CEO of RailRoad Association of South Africa; General Kaine Monyepao, Executive Manager in CEO Office of Cross Border Road Transport Agency, South Africa; Kogan Pillay Head – SADC PPP Network of SADC DFRC, South Africa; Anthony Pearce, Hon. Life Member and Former DG of International Road Federation, UK; Barbara Mommen, CEO of MAPUTO Corridor Logistics Initiative, South Africa; Martin McCann, Global Head of Infrastructure, Mining and Commodities of Norton Rose Fulbright, UK; Dr. Michael Burrow, Senior Lecturer – School of Civil Engineering of University of Birmingham, UK; Dr. Stephen Gumboh, Director and Certified PPP Specialist of Ministry of Finance, Zambia; Tylor Hartwell, Assistant GM and Head of Transport and Telecommunication of Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation (SMBC), UK; Muzi Kubeka, Director of Norton Rose Fulbright, South Africa; Carel Snyman, Senior Manager – Green Transport of SANEDI, South Africa; Gabriel Amuchi, CEO of Federal Roads

Maintenance Agency (FERMA), Nigeria; Cleopatra Shiceka, General Manager of Transnet Freight Rail, South Africa; Raffaele Lorusso, Chief – Planning and Engineering of Italferr (Ferrovie dello Stato Italiane Group for Trenitalia), Italy; Dr. Emeka Agbasi, Assistant Director of Federal Roads Maintenance Agency (FERMA), Nigeria; Nigel Holness, Operations Director of London Underground, UK; Tshepo Kgobe, Senior Executive – Technical and Projects of Gautrain Management Agency, South Africa; Zach van der Walt, Industry Value Engineer of SAP, South Africa; Sunil K. Sinha, General Manager of Delhi Metro Rail Corporation, India; Tiago Massingue, Project Manager of The South African National Roads Agency SOC Ltd (SANRAL) and Alton Wang, General Manager of CSR Zhuzhou Electric Locomotive Co. Ltd., South Africa..

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