

Convention Centres

and their role in SA's future economic success.

At a time of financial prudence and budget frugality, the challenge is for the MICE industry to ensure that the contribution that conferences achieve in their respective societies and economies are understood and appreciated. Conferencing in a country like South Africa, with our unsurpassed natural beauty, golf courses and luxury hotels, can easily be seen to fall solely into the leisure category. That's why it is essential that policy makers understand the tangible economic benefits and specialist knowledge that the industry generates.

South Africa is well known for its mineral and agricultural resources. What is less known – yet obvious – is that we are perfectly suited as a destination for conferencing. Durban, Sandton and Cape Town have world-class infrastructure and conferencing facilities that can comfortably compete with venues around the world.

Central to the CTICC's success has been

its focus on the development of the knowledge economy. Of the nearly 5 000 events hosted by the CTICC over the past 12 years, more than 450 were international conferences across a broad spectrum of sectors, including agro-processing, the green economy, ICT, property, mining and medical industries. These are all sectors that align closely to the City of Cape Town and the Western Cape Government's economic growth strategies. By attracting global associations to the city for these events, the CTICC is making a vital contribution towards growing the city's expertise, knowledge and skills in all these areas.

Future global economic growth is increasingly reliant on intellectual capital. Consequently, the MICE sector has a serious role to play as a key driver of knowledge sharing and intellectual growth in South Africa. To make these important contributions sustainable, the CTICC must remain internationally competitive.

Our expansion will raise the global competitiveness of Cape Town as a premier world-class meetings and events destination.

This in turn allows us to meet the City's Integrated Development Plan's objective of establishing Cape Town as Africa's business events destination. In short, the expansion will double the centre's existing capacity by adding 10 000m² of multi-purpose conference and exhibition space and nearly 3 000m² of meeting space.

There can be no doubt that this industry will be an important part of the future economic success of South Africa. It is for this reason that the CTICC will continue to provide innovative and creative spaces which encourage the exchange of knowledge.

