

Kickstarting the post-Covid-19 economic recovery, the big focus of the 2020 Southern Africa Europe CEO Dialogue

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As the world has ground to a standstill this year, it is more important than ever to rebuild devastated economies.

Rather than being cancelled altogether, the **Southern Africa Europe CEO Dialogue** goes online this year and will be hosted from Johannesburg in **digital** format on **Thursday, 26** and **Friday, 27 November 2020**.

Now in its seventh year, the forum is aimed at strengthening the bridge between southern Africa and, by far, its biggest trading partner, Europe.

The high-level networking and debate platform among key decision makers from the two regions will again bring together influential business leaders, institutions, governments and scholars to engage on the primary topic of “*Southern Africa and Europe after Covid-19*”.

A long-standing partnership between the Gauteng Provincial Government and Europe’s leading think tank, The European House-Ambrosetti, the summit has played a crucial role in stimulating investment and economic opportunities between the two regions.

The Southern Africa Europe CEO Dialogue will look at how Europe and Italy can team up with Africa for sustainable development in light of the devastating impact of the global pandemic, and then set a future course to see how best South Africa and Italy can closely cooperate to ensure a fast, V-shaped recovery.



USA President-Elect Joe Biden at the Ambrosetti flagship summit in Italy

The director-general of the World Health Organisation (WHO), Mr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, will deliver an exclusive message to the summit’s participants via video link this year, while Ms Matshidiso Moeti, the WHO regional director for Africa, will also participate in the summit’s plenary sessions.

“The Covid-19 global pandemic has taken a huge human, emotional and economic toll on our people and decimated the global economy. The Southern Africa Europe CEO Dialogue is a critical gathering, which forms part of helping us identify the priority sectors of the economy that will be key drivers of our economic reconstruction and recovery. The summit has always played a crucial role in shaping our macro-economic picture and also supported our objectives of growing our township economy and we look forward to again engaging our African and European partners this year,” said Gauteng Premier, Mr David Makhura.

On 26 November, some of the world’s most distinguished speakers, CEOs and leaders of major companies will talk about the development prospects in Africa, as well as the challenges and opportunities in stimulating the economic recovery post-Covid-19.

In the digital plenary sessions at the Capital on Park Hotel in Johannesburg on 26 November, the key topics addressed will be:

- Southern Africa and Europe after Covid-19
- CEO's view on business: what's next after Covid-19
- Building an interconnected Africa: transport, digital infrastructure and policies
- A broader energy transition: digitalisation and new technologies to foster sustainability

Among the participants in the dialogue will include Italy's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Ms Emanuela Del Re; the Economic Advisor to South African President Mr Cyril Ramaphosa; Ms Trudy Makhaya; Gauteng Premier, Mr David Makhura; Italy's Ambassador to South Africa, Mr Paolo Cuculi; The European House Ambrosetti Managing Partner and CEO, Mr Valerio De Molli; and Ms Barbara Beltrame, vice president for internationalisation, General Confederation of Italian Industry, Confindustria.

Other expected participants in the plenary sessions include the president of the Emilia-Romagna Region of Italy, Mr Stefano Bonaccini; Zimbabwe Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Mr Mthuli Ncube; South Africa's Minister of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries, Ms Barbara Creecy; and Ms Barbara Marchitto, head of country and financial sector analysis of the European Investment Bank; as well as Gauteng Growth and Development Agency CEO, Ms Mosa Tshabalala.

Private sector participants in the plenary sessions will include Vodacom CEO, Mr Shameel Joosub; the CEO of BNP Paribas South Africa, Mr Vikas Khandelwal; the CEO, Terna Plus, Mr Giovanni Cerchiarini; and the head of Africa, Asia and Oceania, Enel Green Power, Mr Lamberto Dai Pra'.

This year's dialogue will again highlight the critical importance of an interconnected and multimodal transport system in Africa, particularly in Southern Africa, to develop transnational value chains in key sectors, as well as to allow international investments to create jobs in the region.

It will also look at how to build on the positive forward steps made by African governments with the African Continental Free Trade Area - allowing the easing of the barriers that hamper the continent's industrial and human. A big boost for the summit is the participation of Mr Wamkele Mene, the secretary-general of the African Union's Africa Continental Free Trade Area, who will speak on the path towards an integrated economic African continent.

As always, energy will be high on the gathering's agenda, including the need to change the continent's energy consumption and power production patterns, and shift away from fossil fuels towards renewables. The dialogue will look at the latest technological developments related to renewables and the opportunities the energy transition creates in leveraging existing physical assets.

Four vertical webinars will take place digitally on 27 November, in cooperation with Italian and Southern African partners. The topics for these webinars are:

- SMMEs as drivers of economic growth
- Innovation, skills, youth development and capacity for competitiveness
- Safety, sustainability and automation, the South African and Italian packaging industry between challenges and opportunities
- Exploring new tourism models in the new normal

For more information about the Southern Africa Europe CEO Dialogue, please visit the event [website](#) or contact:

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