

Chairperson
Your Excellencies
Distinguished guests

It is indeed a great honour for me to be here today. My congratulations to Omega Investment Research for this initiative and for bringing together such an esteemed and influential group of people.

In the last century, the Southern part of the African continent was characterised by a yearning for liberation, for peace and for economic prosperity. Today we can proudly say that we have achieved liberation and we have achieved peace. But what about economic prosperity?

The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund every year churn out statistics that tell the same tale - Africans are poor and in many instances have fallen so far down it is difficult to imagine them getting poorer.

So, the question is: Is Southern Africa a region of Hope.

To answer this question one first has to look at the meaning of the word “hope”. The word is defined in the Oxford Dictionary as an expectation or desire for a certain thing to occur.

Given this definition, Southern Africa is, in one sense, no longer a region of hope. Why do I say this:

I say this because we no longer hope for peace and liberation, we have achieved this. We no longer hope to become part of the globalised world, we are. Southern Africa has had stable governments and economies for more than a decade now. We are building an Africa that is committed to the fundamental objectives of peace, democracy, respect for human rights, good governance, development and a better life for all.

We are part of a new Africa, which has established or is in the process of establishing such institutions as an African Commission similar to the European Commission, a Pan African Parliament, a Peace and Security Council, Pan African Criminal and Human Rights Courts, an Economic, Social and Cultural Council representative of African civil society, an African Peer Review Mechanism specifically dedicated to the objective of promoting good political, economic and corporate good governance, and, of course, the NEPAD programme.

We are part of a new Africa that has taken firm steps to give concrete meaning to the goal of the political and economic integration of Africa, in pursuit of the objective of African unity that is based on the understanding that as Africans, we share a common destiny. It is a new Africa that has finally made the statement to itself that it must take responsibility for its destiny, that it must take ownership of its own future.

From this perspective we are no longer a region of hope, but a region of action.

However, looking from a different perspective, we are indeed a region of hope:

We are hoping for attitudes and perceptions to change.

Africa is still seen by many in the developed world as the “Dark Continent”, ruled by dictators and rife with corruption, disease, illiteracy, unemployment and crime. We are judged by a different set of values. Civil war in Sudan causes investors to re-evaluate their positions in Botswana, thousands

of kilometres away. Did these investors also exercise caution in Europe during the war in the Balkans? The media is quick to condemn an African government for policies that, when implemented in Europe, goes mostly unnoticed. I would like to quote President Mbeki when he summarised the perceptions about Africa:

- the Continent has no place in the world economy except as a supplier of raw materials;
- there is no requirement that the Continent should have access to modern technology and contemporary human skills;
- such socio-economic problems as the Continent faces should be contained within Africa and addressed as welfare problems;
- no contribution to human civilisation can be expected from Africa except in the fields of the performing and plastic arts and its natural habitat; and
- the Continent has no major role to play in the global system of governance.

In the globalised world we live in, it is no longer possible to simply ignore the plight of one's neighbours. It also means that the decisions we take more often than not have implications that reach beyond the borders of our own countries. The fate of millions of hungry children depends, in many cases, directly on the decisions of leaders in other, often far away countries. Is there today a true appreciation of the global impact of a decision to lower oil production amidst rising demand? Or the effect of agricultural subsidies in Europe on millions of hungry children in Africa? Do the leaders of the G8 realise the true power they have to substantially alter the lives of so many people and the impact it could have if one day this group of leaders decide to take a leap instead of giving small steps.

We are hoping, Mr. Chairperson, that these attitudes and perceptions will change

We are hoping for true multilateralism in the international institutions that guide the complex interaction in a globalised world.

This includes, amongst others, an effective and representative United Nations Security Council and the reform of institutions such as the World Trade Organisation and the World Bank to reflect the economic realities of today and tomorrow. Indeed today, more than ever, the world needs effective mechanisms through which to seek common solutions to common problems. Africa is committed to this ideal. In the Millennium Declaration, our response to these problems can be summarised as follows:

- We have a collective responsibility to uphold the principles of human dignity, equality and equity at the global level. We have a duty therefore to all the world's people, especially the most vulnerable and, in particular, the children of the world, to whom the future belongs....
- Our efforts to make globalisation fully inclusive and equitable "must include policies and measures, at the global level, which correspond to the needs of developing countries and economies in transition and are formulated and implemented with their effective participation.
- We will spare no effort to free our fellow men, women and children from the abject and dehumanising conditions of extreme poverty... We are committed to making the right to development a reality for everyone and to freeing the entire human race from want

This is what President Mbeki said about our success in achieving these objectives:

"I am certain that if we say to those affected by violence and war that we have made a good beginning towards the establishment of a just and lasting peace all over the world, they will not believe us. I am equally certain that if we say to those who, everyday, go to bed hungry, that we have made a good beginning towards freeing the entire human race from want, they will also not believe us"

We are hoping for the democratisation of our international institutions to allow these institutions to achieve their goals and objectives.

And finally, we are hoping for priorities to change

We are hoping to overcome the terrible and devastating consequences of HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, Malaria and the other diseases ravaging our continent. This we can not do alone.

I can use the example of Malaria, one of the leading causes of illness and death in Southern Africa. There are a total of 88 million people living in malaria transmission areas with 14 million children under five and 4 million pregnant women at high risk at any one time of contracting the disease.

In Southern Africa it is estimated that 19-21 million people get malaria each year due to failure in malaria health promotion and prevention. It is also estimated that as many as half a million people in Southern Africa die of malaria every year due to lack of access to basic health care.

And the economic cost?

- \$12 billion annually in lost GDP.
- Malaria consumes 40 percent of public health spending in Africa, and accounts for up to 50 percent of inpatient admissions and outpatient visits in high-prevalence areas.
- High malaria prevalence is associated with a reduction of 1-1.3 percent in national economic growth.

What are we doing, as a global society, to address this: Total global spending on malaria drug and vaccine research is less than \$100 million annually – that is less than the cost of one stealth bomber per year. Maybe this is because developing medicine for the unfortunate millions is simply not economically attractive enough.

For now we have to depend on international pharmaceutical companies to do the right research and for both business and governments to provide affordable medicines to the millions of people that can not afford even basic health care.

We are hoping for these priorities to change.

Mr. Chairperson, I can not conclude without pointing out the enormous contribution Germany makes to the development of Africa and especially Southern Africa. I would like to urge the Germans to increase their efforts, especially within the United Nations, in fulfilling the hopes mentioned above.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairperson, I want to ask each of the distinguished guests gathered here today: Help us change attitudes, perceptions and priorities. Help us turn the words of the Millennium Declaration into action.

For Southern Africa does not want to be a region of hope, we want to be a region of action - contributing to global prosperity and security and fulfilling the dreams and aspirations of our citizens.

I thank you