

Good morning delegates and warm greetings to the Mayor of Ekurhuleni as well as the officials from the metro and the Province of Gauteng.

Two weeks ago, the President of the Republic addressed the nation.

At the heart of his message was the importance of growing the economy, expanding job opportunities and promoting development. He singled out infrastructure as critical to achieve these goals.

You are assembled to consider a project that is infrastructure-rich - that seeks to integrate transport and logistics infrastructure with economic opportunity.

Infrastructure is one of a number of jobs drivers identified in our economic strategy, the New Growth Path and is a key component of the overall vision of the National Development Plan.

For those who are not from South Africa, I am happy to advise that the jobs drivers include

- Agriculture and agro-processing
- Mining and beneficiation
- Manufacturing
- The green economy
- Tourism, the creative industries and other high level services.

Our economy and our population are small by the standards of the China, India, Russia and Brazil or developed economies such as the United States, German or Japan.

However, we live in an increasingly globalised world, where markets of enormous size and scale are available to South African produced goods. But we need to transport them there.

We live in an age where competitive advantage can be gained in new ways: through the speed with which products are brought to those markets, through cutting down the need for large inventory and stocks; through avoiding obsolescence by ordering just what is needed; and through expanding opportunities based on the freshness of products.

When this Conference look at each of these factors, I have no doubt that you will conclude that they provide opportunity on **the demand side** for developing our industrial base and promoting our jobs drivers if we can address the challenge of time and distance.

This is where the supply side opportunities need to be identified, so that we have viable ways of exploiting the real opportunities I spoke of.

Look around us.

OR Tambo International Airport is the African continent's busiest airport with significant links to African and global destinations. It is well run and provide a potential link to the markets out there.

It is located in the continent's largest industrial economy, where we have the know-how, the skills, the innovation and the entrepreneurship that can be assembled. It is these two factors that provide opportunity.

Throughout human history, locational factors have driven where people settle, where they produce, what becomes the trade routes.

In our age, sea-ports and increasingly airports represent that locational potential.

The idea of an aerotropolis comes from that tradition.

But it is more than simply the transport hub for industrial activity in the wide hinterland of our country.

It is the powerful idea that within the precinct of the airport, light manufacturing, services, knowledge-based activities, conference facilities, agro-processing of high value fresh foods, can leverage off the airport, turning a transport hub into a workshop of enterprise and industrial activity.

Our National Infrastructure Plan has identified the need to develop a wider corridor that links Durban, Free State and Gauteng into an industrial and logistics corridor. We call it Strategic Integrated Project 2. So given the location of Ekurhuleni metro and the airport, it can benefit from the rail, road and inland terminals that we are rolling out.

I am looking forward to the findings of this Conference. We need to move beyond making the case for the aerotropolis, to the detailed business plan for its development. You have much existing infrastructure and some existing businesses that already constitute an aerotropolis-lite.

With the proper dedication and commitment, we can expand this to be the powerhouse of economic activities that can create jobs, expand our exports, deepen local industrialisation and increase the reasons why passengers travel to South Africa, on business, for conferences and for tourism.

Delegates and friends

At the end of next month, the Presidents of China, Russia, Brazil and the Prime Minister of India will meet the President of the Republic, at the 5th BRICS Summit. They will assemble under the theme BRICS and AFRICA: Partnership for development, integration and industrialisation.

Africa's growth story is good. Our capacity to help and benefit from that growth is clear.

The work to improve our logistics, our connections with the fast-growing economies elsewhere and on the African continent, is part of a national confidence about the future, about development.

That is where the opportunity is.

That is where this Conference can assist.

I wish you fruitful deliberations and look forward to receive your conclusions. I will table your recommendations with the PICC. Thank you