

CNBC's African-flavoured global outlook

More and more there is an acceptance that we live in a global village, and that much of what happens in the world will affect what happens locally. “To understand, therefore, what is happening locally, it is necessary for the media to track global trends and interpret them for local use,” says Peter Ndoro, head of corporate communications at CNBC Africa, the 24-hour news and business channel set to launch in South Africa tomorrow, Friday, 1 June 2007.

Continues Ndoro, “CNBC Africa is part of a leading network of CNBC affiliates worldwide, and so one of our key attributes will be to tell the African story, and at the same time bring the global perspective to that story.”

According to www.southafrica.info, which has some interesting insights on current global media trends, the launch of CNBC Africa and other Afrocentric channels will intensify the media spotlight on Africa at a time when the northern hemisphere view of the world is increasingly challenged by economic realities and reforms at the United Nations and multilateral institutions.

Changing global perceptions of Africa

Global perceptions of Africa could be changing radically as major international television stations such as CNBC Africa project a different image of the continent and provide African viewers with a global context to better understand global forces and seek advantage for the continent in trade, investment and tourism.

In an article for www.southafrica.info by John Battersby, UK country manager of the International Marketing Council (IMC) of South Africa based in London, he points out that a recent cover story in the influential *Economist* noted that the developing world now accounts for more than 50% of global economic output measured in purchasing-power parity.

The rise of major industrialising developing powers – such as China, India, Brazil, Mexico, South Korea and Turkey – have prompted reforms at the UN, IMF and World Bank as the global centre of gravity shifts closer to the developing countries. Major corporations in the developing countries – such as India's Tata Industries and SA's SABMiller – now account for more than a third of all foreign direct investment in the developing world.

Battersby says that south-south co-operation is no longer a political slogan – it has become an economic reality. Increasingly, global economic growth depends on the economic growth of developing countries.

New standard in broadcasting

“We will set a new standard in broadcasting on the continent that will spur others, and we will work closely with all broadcasters around Africa,” Zafar Siddiqi, chairman of CNBC Africa, told the first International Media Forum in Johannesburg last year.

The forum, which was partnered by the IMC, sought to promote a dialogue between international media and South Africans about mutual perceptions of the country and the African continent. The messages that come through repeatedly were that news organisations are driven by what their readers and subscribers want – rather than focusing on either negative or positive news – that there is no built-in bias against Africa, and that African countries and companies need to develop better communication strategies to compete in the global market place if ideas and enterprises.

South African Minister in the Presidency Essop Pahad, who spoke at the conference, welcomed the tone of speeches from the international editors and suggested that South Africans should revisit the view that the global media was a monolithic bloc that sought to marginalise the continent and entrench negative stereotypes.

The forum kicked off an overdue debate between the international media and SA stakeholders in business and communications about differing domestic and international perceptions of SA and the importance of open and clear communication to promote good governance and economic transparency.

Africa is fast taking its place in the global arena, and driving that move is business and Africa's growing economies. "To continue this growth and really start to fulfil the continent's potential, channels like CNBC Africa are becoming essential," he continues. "Information to make key decisions is what this continent has needed for some time, and CNBC Africa will go a long way in satisfying those needs, Africa is truly a continent of potential, but also with amazing business stories that will finally have a platform to be told."

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