

# Inaugural Africa-ASEAN Business Expo kicks off in November

The inaugural Africa-ASEAN Business Expo (AABE) 2017 launches 6-8 November at the Sandton Convention Centre to establish a new trading launch pad between the two most vibrant economies in the world.



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Spearheaded by the Singapore Manufacturing Federation (SMF) and Conference & Exhibition Management Services (CEMS), this exhibition will serve as a business gateway between Africa and ASEAN. Exhibitors are expected from at least five ASEAN countries, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia and The Philippines. From Africa, companies from South Africa, Central Africa, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Rwanda, and Zimbabwe are expected to participate, with more to come.

The expo targets industries such as environment, water, housing & building construction, infrastructure, healthcare, transportation, food & beverage, IT & telecommunication, franchises, and education sectors.

To augment the exhibition experience further, the Johannesburg Chamber of Commerce and Industry (JCCI) will be organising the concurrent Africa-ASEAN Business Forum 2017. This knowledge platform is slated to attract at least 200 business leaders and delegates from both Africa and ASEAN. JCCI is currently consulting with the commercial offices of ASEAN in Johannesburg and Pretoria to finalise the forum framework and to ensure specially tailored content for maximum benefit.

## Opening the business gateway

In addition, the AABE series will also feature onsite business matching services, as well as a hosted buyers' programme, to bring quality buyers from the African Union and ASEAN to the event. "The strategic regional positioning of the AABE exhibition series is set to open the business gateway, further promoting good business partnerships between both regions," said George Huang, emeritus president of SMF.

A good sign of growing ties between the two regions can already be seen from Singapore emerging as the largest investor in Africa among Southeast Asian countries with a foreign direct investment of \$15.9 billion in 2012, while investments from Malaysia and Indonesia were not far behind.

“A solid business partnership between these two regions would be paramount to promoting economic growth, culminating in greater South-South investment and trade,” said Edward Liu, group MD of CEMS.

The AABE series also enjoys the strong support of the IE Singapore, a government trade agency and the ASEAN Secretariat. Amongst other supporting organisations are the Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers, Gauteng Growth and Development Agency, JCCI, Singapore Business Federation, Singapore Contractors Association Ltd, Singapore infocomm Technology Federation and the Singapore Water Association.

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