

SA president to host World Economic Forum on Africa 2009

CAPE TOWN: Jacob Zuma, the newly elected president of South Africa, will host the 19th World Economic Forum on Africa, to be held in Cape Town from 10 - 12 June 2009. Over 700 leaders from Africa and other parts of the world will gather to deliberate under the theme, "Implications of the Global Economic Crisis for Africa".

"The World Economic Forum on Africa has become a key event on our annual calendar. We are privileged to host so many illustrious global leaders from both the economic and political sectors each year. It means our country continues to have a special place in the hearts and minds of the international community. We are also delighted that the forum has dedicated time on 11 June to the 2010 FIFA Soccer World Cup, a tournament that we are investing all our energies and resources to make a success of it. We look forward to welcoming all our esteemed World Economic Forum on Africa guests to Cape Town and trust that their visit will be a most successful and enjoyable one," Zuma said.

On 6 May 2009, Zuma was elected president by the National Assembly following his party's (African National Congress) general election win. He was sworn into office on 9 May, a date marking the 15th anniversary of Nelson Mandela's inauguration as South Africa's first democratically elected leader following the end of apartheid. Zuma has been engaged with the World Economic Forum for over a decade, participating in the annual meeting in Davos as well as previous Africa and Middle East regional meetings.

World Economic Forum on Africa participants will focus on addressing the global and regional implications of the economic crisis and develop a new roadmap for Africa's future. The launch of the Africa Competitiveness Report 2009 will provide insight for these discussions. Economic deliberations will be closely linked to important social and environmental issues including food security, climate change, healthcare and education. With one year to the kick-off of the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa, participants will explore the economic and social impact of this major international event.

The co-chairs of the 2009 World Economic Forum on Africa are Kofi Annan, secretary-general, United Nations (1997-2006); Member of the Foundation Board of the World Economic Forum; Soud Ba'alawy, executive chairman, Dubai Group, United Arab Emirates; Jiang Jianqing, chairman of the board, Industrial and Commercial Bank of China, People's Republic of China; Graham Mackay, chief executive, SABMiller, United Kingdom; and Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, managing director, World Bank, Washington DC.