

# Story of Africa's future, by Guy Lundy



By [Issa Sikiti da Silva](#)

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Despite Africa sometimes being a very difficult place to do business, we should not look at it as a dark continent but as a place of opportunities experiencing a massive growth, [Guy Lundy](#) said, speaking this morning, Thursday, 2 June 2011, at the 32nd South African Marketing Research Association (SAMRA) Conference at the Riverside Lifestyle Resort in Vanderbijlpark.



"Globalisation is a stark reality that we will not be able to make go away," he said, adding that the flatlining growth in the west means the economic focus has shifted to emerging markets.

Africa is experiencing a phenomenal growth and, as a result, we have not only been seeing the increase of the 'Chindian' and the 'South-South' investments, but also a scramble by former dominant players to start reasserting themselves on the continent.

## "Looking for home-grown talent"

"The aging population in most developed countries and China also means more countries have started knocking on Africa's doors, looking for home-grown talent. So we should do whatever it takes to hold on to our talent, and not let it go, despite the temptation of a much better pay elsewhere," he said.

Lundy, who describes himself as an optimist who always sees the future in a positive angle, said the expansion of telecommunications, including the mobile revolution, has also been helping Africans - mostly young, urbanised and educated - to be aware of what is happening around them.

With changing continental socio-economic and political patterns, including the return of skilled Africans, Lundy urged SA - as a leader and main economic player - to take advantage of what Africa has to offer and capitalise on those opportunities.

Turning its focus on SA, he said the country's recent economic growth of 4.8% (Q1 2011), the relatively low inflation rates in 30 years, the diversification of the economy, the BRICS membership, and the successful hosting of the 2010 FIFA World Cup, among others, means that SA has made a remarkable comeback in the international scene.

## "People and business confidence is also climbing"

"Our economy is fairly diversified - one of the reasons why it didn't collapse, unlike countries such as Ireland. People and business confidence is also climbing - that is good news because the consumer behaviour is also changing."

However, Lundy said the country should be aware of the Eskom factor (power outages) and black swans (Japanese tsunami, for instance), which he said can have a devastating effect on people's lives.

While SA has made new beginnings, especially with the hosting of the soccer world cup, which he said changed the way the world sees the country and helped improve infrastructures, he admitted that poverty and inequality still remain major challenges.

"We should work hard to change this situation, otherwise social instability will always remain in our shadow," he warned.

### **Extreme degree of vigilance needed**

Lundy also said the country needed an extreme degree of vigilance, especially around the issue of Julius Malema, who he said has been distributing insults here and there. "As long as we don't work hard to improve the life of many stragglers and poor people, people like Malema with his scary militant views will always have such people on his side."

But, he warned people not to have assumptions about the future of Africa and SA, despite various challenges.

"Aids, Zimbabwe, Eskom, corruption, racism, crime, education, poverty, among others, are various challenges that we face. But let's not spend time on them but look for missing pieces of the puzzle and fit them into place.

"A positive future is not a spectator's future, but a participant's future", he concluded.

The 2011 SAMRA conference, being attended by more than 160 delegates, ends on Saturday.

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## **ABOUT ISSA SIKITI DA SILVA**

Issa Sikiti da Silva is a winner of the 2010 SADC Media Awards (print category). He freelances for various media outlets, local and foreign, and has travelled extensively across Africa. His work has been published both in French and English. He used to contribute to Bizcommunity.com as a senior news writer.

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