

## Post-2010 retail under scrutiny

After the economic shot in the arm provided by the 2010 World Cup, the retail sector in Africa's largest economy is knuckling down to assess how to maintain, encourage, and identify untapped opportunities for retail growth in the months to come.



Jacqueline Gold, chief executive, Gold Group International will present at the 14th Annual African Congress of Shopping Centres in October.

This assessment will take place at the 14th Annual African Congress of Shopping Centres, hosted by the SA Council of Shopping Centres (SACSC), sponsored by Growthpoint Properties, and supported by the International Council of Shopping Centres (ICSC), in October.

"This year's congress theme is Relevance, Balance and Responsibility," says SACSC congress chairman Julie Hillary.

"We chose it to signal a move away from the economic fears of the past few years, but also to push beyond the incredible uptick of the World Cup, and into the future."

### Weaker than expected pick-up

The 2010 World Cup, which ended in the second week of July, helped bring about half a million tourists into the country. June retail sales data spotlights the significant economic impact of the event, with a 7.4% gain year-on-year, thanks to more upbeat spending on clothes, food and sports goods.

The Ministry of Finance estimates that the month-long event helped boost the size of the economy by 1%. But economists caution that the one-off boost provided by the World Cup doesn't change the structural constraints in SA's

economy. They point to a weaker-than-expected pickup in retail sales data, household debt levels that are close to record highs, and unemployment at close to 25%.

Even after seven SA Reserve Bank rate cuts since the end of 2008, expectations are that the Bank will again cut rates in September 2010, by as much as .5%.

"These are the economic fundamentals we'll be debating and analyzing at the Congress," says SACSC President Sisa Ngebulana, pointing especially to a specialised session scheduled for the second day of the Congress.

"While the retail sector is experiencing a slight and gradual improvement, there remain many challenges ahead," says Stephan le Roux, Growthpoint Properties Limited Divisional Director: Retail. "To prevail in this difficult environment, having the best retail knowledge and putting it into practice will ensure that both shopping centres and individual retailers remain competitive."

## Pure Gold

Entitled *Economic Overview and the Retail Sector*, the panel discussion will feature the views of Andile Mazwai of Barnard Jacob Mellet Holdings; Maurice de Villiers of Woolworths; Mike Rodel of listed fund Hyprop; Jason McCormick of McCormick Property; and Lyndon Kan of ABSA.

For the global perspective, Congress speakers include Jacqueline Gold, high-profile chief executive of Gold Group International which includes UK brands Ann Summers and Knickerbox. Gold is one of Britain's most charismatic and successful businesswomen and an inspiration to thousands of women. She has been voted the second most powerful woman in retail by Retail Week UK. Other speakers will include director of development at Portland Design UK, Alan Thompson and David Kneale, CEO of Clicks Group.

The 14th annual African Congress of Shopping Centres, sponsored by Growthpoint Properties, will take place from 13 to 15 October, 2010 at the Cape Town International Convention Centre. For more information, email [confer@iafrica.com](mailto:confer@iafrica.com) or online [www.sascscongress.co.za](http://www.sascscongress.co.za).

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