

Smart urbanism, sustainability in the spotlight at upcoming RICS Summit Africa

Scheduled for 30-31 May in Sandton Central, Johannesburg, the 2018 RICS Summit Africa event plans to put the spotlight on smart urbanism and sustainability.

“The dominant theme for RICS Summit Africa this year is ‘Driving sustainable growth through smart urbanisation’. In the wake of rising economic growth, Africa’s rapid urbanisation topped the agenda at last year’s summit. And this year, we zone into how Africa can build smarter cities and more sustainable cities, to better deal with its high levels of urbanisation and global climate change,” says TC Chetty, South Africa country manager of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS).



TC Chetty, South Africa country manager of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS)

Now in its fourth year, the RICS Summit Africa will follow the RICS Summit of the World Built Environment Forum, which takes place in London later this month.

Creating smarter, more sustainable urban environments

“With Africa’s billion-strong population seeking economic opportunities and better lifestyles in its cities, the pressure is on urban planners to create smarter and more sustainable urban environments. Greater demands are placed on resources such as water and electricity, but also on infrastructure around which cities are built,” says Chetty.

“The recent water crisis in Cape Town - in fact, water issues in general in other parts of South Africa and the continent as a whole - has brought home the very real impacts of climate change. Fellow coastal city, Durban, has faced a different side of climate change, with beach erosion and the resultant destruction of coastal property becoming a concern. While South Africa has overcome the electricity crisis of a few years back, power generation issues remain an infrastructure challenge in many parts of the rest of Africa. Built environment professionals, including city planners, are at the heart of dealing with such issues, whether it’s through building water and other infrastructure or innovations in the green building and the renewable energy space,” he adds.

Inclusive growth and sustainable development in Africa

More than 20 international and local speakers and panellists will take part in discussions at RICS Summit Africa this year. Speakers on the first panel on inclusive growth and sustainable development in Africa include Siyabonga Gama, group chief executive of Transnet; Alastair Herbertson, director of the Emerging Africa Infrastructure Fund at Investec Asset Management; and Sheila Galloway, group CEO of Utho Group.



Siyabonga Gama, group chief executive of Transnet

“This session seeks to explore the link between integrated, cross-continental infrastructure and inclusive, sustainable economic growth. The panellists will also look at how Africa can benefit from China’s multi-trillion-dollar One Belt, One Road (OBOR) trade and infrastructure initiative,” says Chetty.

Scalable and sustainable infrastructure solutions

Speakers on the second panel discussion include Adama Deen, senior advisor on strategic infrastructure initiatives at the New Partnership for African Development (Nepad); Ana Hajduka, founder and CEO of Africa Green Co; and Linda Mabhena-Olagunju, founder and managing director of DLO Energy Resource Group. They will look at scalable and sustainable infrastructure solutions to the continent’s power deficit, and how to power up Africa’s burgeoning cities. The trio will zone into flagship power infrastructure projects on the continent, including renewable solutions, micro grids and energy efficient design. They will also assess the role of city leaders, innovators and businesses in addressing Africa’s electricity challenges.



Linda Mabhena-Olagunju, founder and managing director of DLO Energy Resource Group

RICS' global leadership team set to attend and address the summit this year includes president of RICS John Hughes (FRICS), who is founding partner of Toronto-based Hemson Consulting and Sean Tompkins, CEO of RICS.

For more information, go to www.rics.org/summitafrica.

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