



**DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

*St Patricks' Day Ball in Cape Town, 15<sup>th</sup> March 2008*  
 For more information please contact:  
[aoife@saintpatrickstrust.com](mailto:aoife@saintpatrickstrust.com)  
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**Trade Exhibitions**

*Mining Indaba, 4<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> February 2008*  
 For more information please visit  
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*Design Indaba Expo, 23<sup>rd</sup> - 26<sup>th</sup> February 2008*  
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[www.designindaba.com](http://www.designindaba.com)

*Tourism Indaba, 13<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup> May 2008*  
 For more information please visit  
[www.indaba-southafrica.co.za](http://www.indaba-southafrica.co.za)

# E - N E W S

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JANUARY 2008

## FOCUS ON IRISH TRADE MISSION

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It's not all doom and gloom in Africa, Bertie Ahern writes from Johannesburg on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> January, and Ireland has a role to play in helping nations there.

Ireland recognises much of itself in Africa. The challenges of nation building, overcoming conflict and the fight against hunger and poverty are familiar themes of our history. But so too is a sense of the opportunities that peace, reconciliation and stability can bring.

It is in this spirit that I am visiting South Africa and Tanzania. It is also with the knowledge of the proud contribution that Irish missionaries and non-governmental organisations have historically made to Africa and which the Government's funding, through Irish Aid, is making today.

I hope that my visit, which follows that of President McAleese to Lesotho, Mozambique and Tanzania in 2006, helps to build on these links and on the potential for even stronger political, economic and cultural ties that this vast and diverse continent offers.

Africa's challenges are enormous and can appear overwhelming. It is, of course, for African countries themselves to set the course for their own development and foster opportunities for their own citizens. For the poorest among them, external development assistance will continue to be needed to ensure that basic health, education and nutrition needs are met and that ultimately they get to a

position where they can benefit more fully from global economic opportunities.

The images we see of Africa are often those of poverty and conflict. But that is far from being the full picture. Many African countries are currently experiencing healthy economic growth. South Africa and Tanzania are good examples of countries that have managed to spread the benefits of economic growth to the wider population.

They are also forces for peace and stability in their respective regions and across the continent. Both are active members of the African Union and the Southern Africa Development Community. We know from our own experience within the European Union of the importance of economic and political integration for development and a sense of national ambition.

For more advanced economies such as South Africa, we see a lot of potential to strengthen our direct trade and investment links. Accompanied by Minister Micheál Martin I am leading a delegation of over 50 companies drawn from sectors as diverse as food, telecommunications, consumer goods and education to Pretoria and Cape Town.

Ireland's trade in services with South Africa, including tourism, was estimated at €876 million in 2006, and we have significant opportunities also to grow our merchandise trade which was

valued at almost €400 million in the first eight months of last year alone. Investment flows are also strong in both directions, and strengthening. This level of exchange points to the strong potential of this resource-rich continent.

Ireland's support for Africa's development effort is channelled through the Government's aid programme. Overall spending on the programme will reach €914 million this year and we are well on our way to meeting the UN target of allocating 0.7 per cent of our GNP to overseas development assistance by 2012. Ireland is now the sixth-largest donor per capita in the world and has one of the most highly regarded aid programmes in the world. My visit will allow me to see for myself the impact we are having in responding in a flexible and accountable way to the needs of some of the world's poorest people.

Tanzania is one of Ireland's nine priority countries for development assistance. Between 2007 and 2010 we will spend €170 million there mainly on rural development, health and HIV and Aids and good governance. These are areas that make a direct contribution to the fight against poverty. Along with Minister of State for Overseas Development Michael Kitt, I will visit Irish Aid-funded projects and discuss our co-operation and the political situation in the region with President Kikwete.

In South Africa, I had the opportunity to see the great work that

Niall Mellon and his volunteers are doing with the Township Trust in Cape Town, as well as also visiting a number of Irish Aid-funded projects. Today I will have a chance to meet Belfast-born Fr Kieran Creagh, who runs a hospice to care for terminally ill poor people. Fr Creagh has recently returned to South Africa following an incident in which he was shot and seriously injured in February last year. He encapsulates the spirit of generosity, tenacity and courage with which Irish missionary and NGO workers in Africa are so closely associated. There is a sizeable Irish diaspora, including over 500 missionaries, in South Africa, and a considerable number of Irish missionaries and development workers in Tanzania. I look forward to meeting many of them during my visit and to warmly acknowledging their contribution to development and

the economic, political and cultural life of their adopted countries.

The ties that bind Ireland and Africa are strong and enduring: a striving for peace, equality and a better future for all as evidenced by our attachment to the United Nations, our joint development efforts and more recently through increased trade, investment and migration flows.

Reconciliation in South Africa provided an inspiration to our own peace process. We have much to learn from each other. I hope that the visit will in some small way contribute to a renewed sense of common purpose and ambition, not just in terms of relations between Ireland and South Africa and Tanzania, but with all our partners on the continent.

## 2010 WORLD CUP WILL KICK OFF BONANZA FOR IRISH BUSINESS

THE 2010 football World Cup in South Africa is a huge opportunity for Irish businesses to make money and create jobs as was reported in the Irish Independent around the recent government trade mission to South Africa on 14<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup> January.

Irish companies were expected to sign contracts worth at least €20m in South Africa on Wednesday as part of Ireland's biggest ever trade mission to the African continent.

But with a population of almost 185 million people in the southern African region alone, the government wants Irish firms to harness the formidable power of the World Cup.

In two years time, more than a billion people will watch the tournament on TV, while millions more are expected to flock to South Africa as tourists.

Trade between South Africa and Ireland is worth almost €500m a year and the aim of the trade mission is to help small and medium sized firms expand in the region.

Speaking ahead of the visit to Cape Town and Johannesburg, Enterprise Minister Micheal Martin said: "The 2010 World Cup offers many opportunities for a range of Irish firms.

The government will also strongly urge South Africans to import more Irish beef following the opening up of the market in recent

months.

More than 50 companies will be represented during the four-day trade visit, which will also include an address by Taoiseach Bertie Ahern to South African business leaders.

The deals to be announced on Wednesday include contracts for Irish firms to oversee projects in sewerage treatment, power supply and mobile technology.

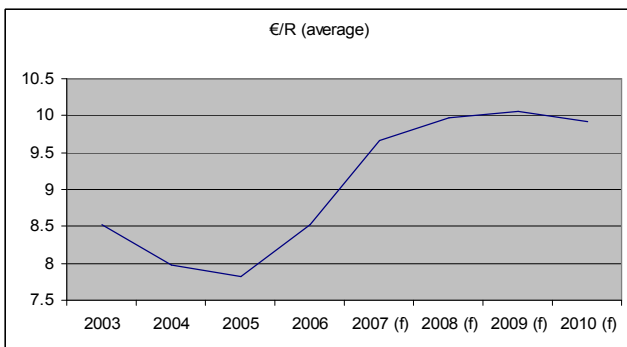
Mr Martin said yesterday: "There is much scope for further growth. The aim of this visit is to support Irish companies to develop a presence in South Africa.

"That is through trade, investment, partnership and other business linkages. Many such strategic alliances already exist between Irish and South African companies.

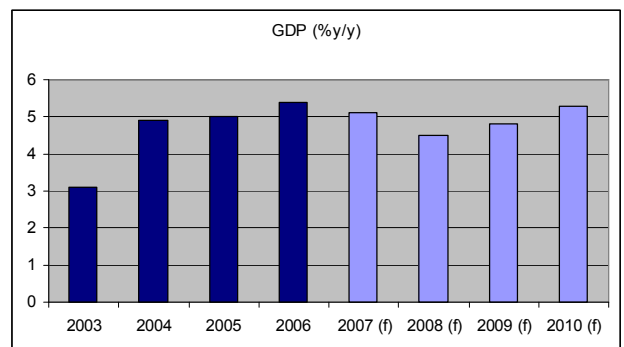
"The strong links between the two countries puts Irish business in a prime position to contribute to and benefit from South Africa's dynamic economic transformation.

"Dramatic changes in the structures and operations of South Africa's ports, railways, airports and its utilities such as electricity, water and gas, offer particular opportunities for Irish companies."

*BY Irish Independent*



**Euro / Rand Exchange Rate**



**GDP Growth**

## PEAT FIRM MUSHROOMS IN AFRICA

A MONAGHAN firm has secured the first major contract as part of a Government trade mission to South Africa taking place this week.

Clones-based Harte Peat, which provides deeply dug wet peat for the mushroom industry, signed a distribution deal with a local partner company which will see its products distributed throughout South Africa.

The deal will see Harte Peat's produce being used by 35% of the South African mushroom market within 18 months.

Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment Micheál Martin said the deal shows that Harte Peat and its 25 employees in Clones have become world leaders in their field.

"Harte have developed a quality environmentally friendly product which has been successfully launched in many markets since the company was established in 1987."

During the contract signing in Cape Town, the company's managing director Thomas O'Harte briefed Mr Martin on the company and planned developments.

More than 50 Irish companies are taking part in the Enterprise Ireland trade mission to South Africa this week.

The trade mission moves to Johannesburg this morning following what Mr Martin said was a very successful first leg in Cape Town.

## ESB POWERS 2010 WORLD CUP IN €4.5M DEAL

SOCCER fans nervous about the Republic's chances of qualifying for the 2010 World Cup will get a fresh shiver down their spine with news that the survival of the tournament may depend on the ESB.

The Irish power company will agree a big contract to help put South Africa's delay-dogged preparations for the sporting extravaganza back on track, thus saving it from potential collapse.

The company's international wing — which has a much better reputation than its domestic operation — is to provide key technical support and advice under a €4.5 million deal unveiled by Enterprise Minister Micheál Martin in Johannesburg.

The move came as Taoiseach Bertie Ahern voiced fears the boys in green face an uphill battle making it to South Africa in two years' time.

"We need to find some new players... 10% of our population is non-Irish. You never know, we could be lucky," he told an audience of South African business leaders in Johannesburg.

The ESB International deal with South African power firm Eskom will provide engineering consultancy services in the construction of an extra 1,000MW of generation capacity — enough to power 400 Croke Parks — at a key plant near Cape Town, needed on stream by the end of next year to ensure supply for the World Cup.

## AHERN IN €5M PLEDGE TO TOWNSHIP TRUST

TAOISEACH Bertie Ahern on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> January pledged €5 million in support for the Irish mass volunteer project building homes across South Africa's poverty-stricken townships.

On the first day of his visit to the country, Mr Ahern praised the work of the Niall Mellon Trust which has housed more than 5,000 families in the past six years. Irish businessman Mr Mellon, who set up the project after visiting a shanty town during a vacation in 2002, welcomed the backing as key to lifting people out of despair as the Taoiseach handed over one of the homes built by volunteers two months ago to a local family at the Freedom Park township. The organisation is South Africa's biggest provider of charity housing and hopes to bring 2,008 Irish helpers to the shack slums of Cape Town and Johannesburg for this year's 'building blitz' in November.

Mr Ahern later launched the Chello Foundation, an educational charity that aims to provide an education for children who have been orphaned by HIV/Aids. The Taoiseach also looked in on an inner city regeneration project in Cape Town which is part of the Dublin-based Howard Eurocape group. The Eurocape development also houses the Amawele School Twinning Project and the St Patrick's Charitable Trust.

Mr Ahern then flew to Johannesburg for a meeting today with South African president Thabo Mbeki.

Mr Ahern will then fly north for a two-day visit to see Irish aid projects in Tanzania which will take him close to the border with strife-torn Kenya.

*With thanks to the Irish Examiner*

## AHERN, MBEKI DISCUSS ZIMBABWE CRISIS

The crisis in Zimbabwe, which left the country's capital, Harare, without water yesterday, dominated talks on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> January between Bertie Ahern and South Africa's president Thabo Mbeki.

During an hour-long meeting, which ran significantly over time, the South African leader briefed the Taoiseach on his ongoing efforts to broker a deal. President Mbeki is leading attempts to persuade Zimbabwe's president Robert Mugabe to hold elections and to adopt a new, democratic constitution. However, Mr Mbeki is believed to have argued against the holding of parliamentary elections and a referendum on the same day, as some EU leaders have suggested. The Zimbabwean leader, who up to now has ignored international protests, is facing pressure to improve government and reform the police. However, the pace of the talks is understood to be slow, and while significant progress has been made in some areas, a final package is far from ready.

Speaking after his meeting with Mr Mbeki, Mr Ahern said: "We all continue to have grave concerns at the deteriorating situation in Zimbabwe.

"President Mbeki will be engaged within days on the final aspects of a deal. He is working extremely hard on it and, hopefully, some of

the particular obstacles around will disappear." Mr Ahern side-stepped a question from the South African media about the impact that a change of political leadership in South Africa could have on relations between the two countries.

The newly elected head of the African National Congress, Jacob Zuma, is favourite to replace Mr Mbeki when the latter's term ends in 18 months, even though he is currently facing corruption charges. "We had a very good meeting and we look forward to working with him [Mr Mbeki] for the future, and for our countries' relationship to flourish and extend," Mr Ahern replied.

Meanwhile, Ireland is to share experience about creating training programmes for young workers, based on models funded in Ireland in the past by the European Union. "This is an area where we need to strengthen our relationship," said deputy president Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, who visited Ireland last year. The South African government, she said, "is in the process of reviewing its anti-poverty strategy and the issue of skills for young people is a major one".

Mr Ahern and the Minister for State for Overseas Development Aid, Michael Kitt, along with officials, later travelled to Dar es Salaam in Tanzania.

## AHERN WELCOMES REOPENING OF SA TO BEEF EXPORTS

The South African decision to reopen its markets to Irish beef exports offers significant opportunities in coming years, Taoiseach Bertie Ahern has said. Prior to the import ban in 2000, imposed because of South African concerns about BSE, Ireland sold €57 million worth of beef into the country.

"Beef is Ireland's oldest traded product and still our single most important food export. Last year we exported €1.5 billion worth of beef raised on Europe's most fertile pastures," said Mr Ahern.

The beef, he told South African importers gathered at a seminar organised by Bord Bia, was processed and sourced by safety rules "that lead the very best in the world".

Neither the European Commission nor any individual EU state had ever put any restrictions on Irish meat exports during the BSE crisis.

"The decision of the South African ministry of agriculture to allow the resumption of Irish beef exports earlier this year was, therefore, both timely and welcome," Mr Ahern told the importers.

The Department of Agriculture and Food sees the South African reopening decision "as a significantly important outlet", pointing out that Irish beef companies were keen to get back in. "From both its individual market perspective and the message it sends regarding the safety of Ireland's beef, the reopening decision represents a very important step," said the department.

The Government attempted for several years to get the ban lifted, but a visit by South African inspectors in 2002 "came to no firm

conclusion and the ban remained in place".

Minister for Agriculture and Food Mary Coughlan wrote to her South African counterpart last year offering another inspection tour as BSE cases continued to fall.

The inspectors gave a positive verdict after they travelled in April, and the South African government gave the all-clear in October, subject to veterinary certification which has now been done.

The bulk of Irish beef exports, in sharp contrast to a decade ago, now goes to EU countries, but markets such as South Africa remain important.

"While the current strong performance of the euro will reduce the attractiveness of markets outside the EU, the price of beef is on the increase in South Africa and the market will develop," said the Department of Agriculture and Food.

Last year Ireland had just 25 cases of BSE, compared with 41 in 2006, 69 in 2005 and 126 in 2004.

Speaking later at an Enterprise Ireland lunch, Mr Ahern said South Africa would be "the powerhouse" for developing mobile telecommunications throughout sub-Saharan Africa in years to come.

Meanwhile, a Dublin recruitment firm, SAON, announced yesterday that it was to take over one of South Africa's biggest jobs websites, currently advertising 15,000 jobs per month.

Also yesterday, Swords-based software firm InI Solutions sold technology that will be used by hotels and B&Bs to take accommodation orders during the World Cup.

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