

Economist paints positive picture for SA

"Mess with agri and you mess with entire economy" - Dr Botha

Adriaan de Beer

Providing a balanced and authoritative perspective on South Africa's economic and political outlook, Dr Roelof Botha's address to the business sector in the city, was well accepted. He addressed members of the Kruger Lowveld Chamber of Business and Tourism (KLCBT) and Afrikaanse Handelsinstituut (AHI) at the Emnotweni Casino in Mbombela.

Botha, a seasoned veteran of public finance and economics painted a positive future for the country. He said good leadership, a clever government policy and teamwork are the mainstay of success and would put the country back on track. "The Rand has strengthened considerably since President Cyril Ramaphosa took office, while a positive energy is emanating from government. South Africa has the stability needed to secure its currency," he said.

Botha again emphasised the importance of agriculture. "If you mess with agriculture, you mess with the entire economy." Asked whether the current political situation with



Liezl Streicher, Tembi Topham, Wilma Mahne Dr. Roelof Botha and Alison Sweers from SPAR. (Photos: Adriaan de Beer)

regards to land expropriation would have a negative effect on the country, he told **NewsHorn** that he did not believe so. "In fact, the EFF could find itself at the wrong end of the stick following the next general election, the same route Cope followed after it first started".

He said the implications of the leadership change in Government in particular were already proving to have a positive effect on the economy. He also stressed the fact that government has launched initiatives to stimulate economic growth and that the country's growth prospects for 2018 were optimistic.

With reference to greater political stability in Southern African Development Community (SADC), Botha said there were some silver linings.

Despite the regression of public sector efficiency over the past decade under the leadership of Jacob Zuma, economic growth may surprise on the upside in 2018 due to a

number of silver linings.

During the first half of 2017, visitors to South Africa from overseas increased by 11% over the first six months of 2016 to reach a new all-time record high of 1.3 million people, outperforming global tourism growth by a healthy margin.

Also, the recovery of metal and mineral prices and record harvests in the country's summer rainfall regions has led to a remarkable recovery of the primary sectors of the economy.

Furthermore, most of South Africa's key trading partners are experiencing improved economic conditions, which is good news for our exporters.

"The new political leadership of the governing party embarked on more business-friendly policies and substituting radical economic transformation with increased economic growth, the future socio-economic environment could improve substantially from 2018 onwards," Botha said.



Linda Grimbeeck (Chief Operating Officer of KLCBT) with Dr Roelof Botha.