

## **Statement at the Official opening of Terminal 1 at the Johannesburg International Airport**

27 August 1999

Johannesburg

Master of Ceremonies, Ms, Charmaine Loodewyk  
Minister of Transport, Mr Dullah Omar  
Chairman of the ACSA Board, Mr Neal Chapman  
Managing Director of Aeroporti da Roma, Mr Gaetano Galia  
Distinguished Guests  
Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am very pleased to have been invited here to open this new terminal because I believe that this is a significant development not only for us in South Africa but for all of us within the SADC region.

The opening of this new Terminal 1 is rich in symbolism. It reflects the thriving of an important company in a sector of our economy in which South Africa justly takes pride. It also symbolises much of what has only become possible with the coming of democracy to South Africa.

It is with pride that we have managed to rise to the challenges of the global economy in which we as Southern Africa take this historical opportunity to assume our pivotal role as a point of entry and of intersection between Africa, Europe, the Middle East, the Indian sub-continent, Australasia and South America.

The changes at Johannesburg International Airport embody the spirit of the African Renaissance, as the gateway to Sub Saharan Africa and between east and western countries. We are a geostrategically privileged region with respect to our position at the heart of this dynamic mix of economies, peoples, and cultures. It is good to see that we have positively taken advantage of our strategic position in the region and Africa at large.

By doing so we will play a critical role in helping to foster the understanding that we are one continent with one destiny. This in turn promotes the continental co-operation in line with the African Renaissance, the reconstruction and development of our continent.

South Africa is actively involved with regional players to give effect to the SADC protocol which as you may know, seeks to integrate transport systems of the region and advance regional economic and social prosperity. South Africa's involvement in the replacement of ground-based communication systems with a satellite-based communication system in 12 of the 14 SADC states is one example of an initiative to improve levels of efficiency and safety in the aviation industry.

South African airports have been over the years transformed from dull, poorly equipped operations to dynamic and technologically improved institutions. They have thus served to connect millions of tourists and business people to 33 cities within Africa, as well as 30 major cities in the world.

These achievements have asserted our country in the world stage. We are today sharing in the success of the Airports Company, which has witnessed the number of airlines increase from 21 international airlines in 1990 to 60 international airlines in 1999. One cannot leave out the significant increase in passengers from 4 million in 1990 to 20m in 1999.

It is encouraging to see South African companies in the aviation industry such as SAA, the Air Traffic and Navigation Services Company and ACSA not only position themselves relative to other world class players in the market, but are actively seeking alliances with other service providers in the region.

It gives me pleasure to congratulate the ACSA board of directors, its management, staff and Aeroporti da Roma, which own a 20% stake in ACSA, at this prestigious opening of a world class terminal at Johannesburg International Airport.

It is appropriate at this stage to thank the Italian Company for having invested in ACSA. It shows their commitment towards meaningful economic and infrastructural development of the developing nations. It is also pleasing to see the emergence of the African businesses, which in partnership with global players can bring African solutions to African problems. The successful partnership between ACSA and ADR is the testimony to the confidence that foreign business has in South Africa and thus encourages other investors to do the same.

ACSA, in common with many other of our country's leading companies, is playing a significant role in various ways in contributing to the building of our economy and our nation.

Our government recognises that the upgrading and construction of all transport routes are vital to a viable scenario for investment. We as government realise that any development of our society depends on a partnership of all social sectors. It is in this spirit that we are joining hands in partnership of all social sectors to tackle the most serious challenges we face, whether it is infra-structural development, crime, corruption, and unemployment. We are talking of a partnership between government and business and partnership between public sector and private sector.

In these partnerships of all social sectors we count heavily on the private sector, whether it be through excellence in their chosen field of operation, through the programmes of skills development for those denied proper education, or through opening of opportunities to those in whose way the policies of the past placed barriers.

Indeed, we also regard the private sector as an indispensable partner in the reconstruction and development of South Africa and the region for job-creation and in helping reduce the backlog of services. Through partnership, we can build better life for all citizens of this country and beyond its borders.

There are so many challenges that are facing us in this country; principal among these are job-creation and ensuring sustainable economic growth. Tourism can play a major role in creating employment opportunities for people of this country. It has great potential to create hundreds of thousands of jobs. ACSA cannot but be a central player in unleashing our tourism potential.

It is therefore a distinct pleasure to share with you the official opening of this magnificent International Terminal in which we take pride.

We should take this opportunity to wish ACSA, and Aeroporti da Roma and all their staff continued success in their future endeavours, both in South Africa and abroad. Once again, congratulations on your success to date, and for the domestic and international recognition which this has brought.

It is now my pleasure to declare Terminal 1 opened.

Thank you.