

Agbiz media statement

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Sustainability and resilience in the spotlight at Agbiz Congress 2022

The Agbiz Congress 2022 takes place just as the world and South Africa are emerging from the Covid-19 pandemic, which led to increased unemployment and constrained economic growth. On the back of the pandemic, the Russia-Ukraine war has introduced new uncertainties, particularly for agricultural trade and food prices. The 2022 Agbiz Congress will therefore be focused on sustainability and resilience in the face of uncertainty.

The Covid pandemic has been the most notable disruption in many decades and we have all had to adapt fast and drastically in an attempt to limit the damage. The single most important factor that has ensured the longevity of the agricultural sector in a rapidly changing environment over time has been the ability of its business leaders to recognise the changing times and to adapt, reposition and address the changes and challenges successfully.

South Africa and the agribusiness sector are at a crossroads with various challenges and choices. The well-being of our country is firmly in the hands of our agricultural and agribusiness sectors. It is for this reason that we have decided on the congress theme “Building resilient and sustainable agri-food systems”.

Standard Bank will again be the main sponsor for the Agbiz Congress 2022 that will be held at the Sun City Convention Centre from 22 to 24 June 2022.

Top international and local experts will address key issues such as the global geopolitical environment we operate in, the global and local political economy and the new dynamics in the global risk landscape that many sectors face. Furthermore, the key issues of sustainable energy supply, market access for South African agricultural products, and the impact of technology and innovation on the competitiveness of South Africa’s industries will be discussed.

The dynamic programme promises to provide insights from high-profile speakers such as Richard Smith-Bingham, leader of a global team that helps frame Marsh McLennan’s thinking on big risks. He is also a long-term contributor to the *World Economic Forum Global Risks Report*. Richard will outline the current trend of consecutive crises with compounding effects and how to manage risk in such an uncertain environment.

Prof. Mills Soko, professor of international business and strategy at Wits Business School, will bring an outlook on geopolitics and the role of South Africa in the world; Kuben Naidoo, deputy governor of the South African Reserve Bank, will provide an economic outlook and André de Ruyter, chief executive officer of Eskom Holdings, will address the congress on the energy crisis in South Africa.

The session on creating market access will feature experts such as Anton Kruger of the Fresh Produce Exporters' Forum, Niki Kruger of the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition, the director-general of the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development Mooketsa Ramasodi, and Portia Derby, the group chief executive of Transnet.

A session dedicated to creating an enabling environment for innovation is not to be missed as industry leaders, academia and the relevant government departments will discuss how an environment can be created where innovation and new technologies are fostered.

Sequence of events

The congress will kick off with a golf day sponsored by Absa at the Lost City Country Club on 22 June. In the evening, delegates will be welcomed at the official reception, hosted in the exhibition hall. This will provide a place for delegates to meet and for sponsors and exhibitors to showcase their businesses.

As an exciting service to the agri-food industry, the Agbiz Congress 2022 will also provide agribusinesses an opportunity to showcase their latest products and services as exhibitors in the trade exhibition.

The plenary session of the congress starts on the morning of 23 June 2022, with parallel panel discussions in the afternoon.

The gala dinner on Thursday, 23 June 2022, sponsored by John Deere Financial, is the social highlight of the congress featuring excellent food and great company. The plenary session continues on Friday, 24 June 2022 up until lunch, followed by the Agbiz annual general meeting.

Join Agbiz, policymakers and agribusiness leaders from across the food, fibre and beverage sectors to help shape the future of the broader South African agro-food industry.

For more information on the programme, to register and book accommodation, visit the congress website: <https://www.agbiz.co.za/events/congress-2022> or contact Karen Grobler at Agbiz: karen@agbiz.co.za.

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