



18h00 on Tuesday, 1 November 2016

CEO 2016 AVI AWARDS DINNER SPEECH

Honourable Deputy Minister of Transport, Ms Sindisiwe Chikunga,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my greatest pleasure to welcome you all to the 2016 ATNS Avi Afrique Aviation Summit Gala Dinner.

Deputy Minister, the Aviation industry plays a vital role in the development of suitable and adequate infrastructure - to support global economic growth. Recent research has shown that Air Traffic Management (AT M) infrastructure development is essential to the growth and functioning of air transport services in the African region.

The growth of the aviation industry within this context is necessary to stimulate a more diversified export base across the region and for the expansion of tourism. Improvements in air transport infrastructure are meant to alleviate poverty and unemployment - by improving the general standards of living of all citizens. This in turn will lead to lowered transport costs - as a result of more rapid economic growth and increasing personal mobility.

The AVI Awards seeks to create a platform that will bring in great ideas and assist innovators in turning their innovation ideas into commercially-viable products or services.

I would like to take this time to acknowledge and introduce the CEO of the Technology Innovation Agency (TIA), Mr Barlow Manilal. Deputy Minister, TIA is the Official Partner of ATNS Avi Awards. Our relationship began last year and was formalised early this year.

Both entities have a formal agreement in place. We are co-operating with

ATNS/HO/BD24

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each other first, with regard to an integrated approach to technology research & development and innovation in the aviation industry in South Africa, secondly, to promote innovation and excellence by providing a platform designed to act as a conduit for information-sharing between academics, research institutions, government and non-governmental organisations - that are active in the aerospace industry, locally and internationally.

A clarion call to African innovators, emerging and established: You must find your niches of excellence, capitalise on that, and use the AVI Afrique Awards as an integrated approach to innovation for the industry and the continent, that can positively contribute to shared economy.

It was at this very podium that I prophetically stated that the first winners of the inaugural AVI Awards 2015 will encourage more entries for this year, that is, 2016. Over eighty (80) entries from university students, companies, emerging and professional innovators - were received.

Once again, may we kindly give a round of applause to last year's winners, namely:

- Mark Van Wyk from FlyH2 Aerospace, for his project with FLYH2 Aerospace, where they are developing a large, fixed-wing unmanned aircraft for survey and environmental research purposes.
- Michael Inggs from the University Of Cape Town (UCT). Inggs' project focused on the theoretical and practical demonstration of the detection and tracking of aircraft, large and small, using low cost technology based on existing FM Broadcast Band emitters.
- Ms Tebogo Thamage from the Daily Sun. Her story focused on understanding how the military conducted their air combat operations.



Stories like this show what the modern economy is all about. Creativity, ambition and the smart use of new technology.

Deputy Minister, what we need is economic innovation. Real innovation. We need to give the likes of Mark Van Wyk, Michael Inggs and Tebogo Thamage the space they need to succeed. Or a helping hand, if they need one. ATNS and TIA have since created a climate for innovation that encourages companies and research centres. One that helps them get the best out of themselves and each other.

We are gathered here because of the need for, and the power of building and maintaining relationships with our stakeholders. My sincere message to our valued stakeholders is that “your contributions are essential to making the Avi Afrique Innovation Summit a success and, more important still, to taking African aviation to the next level. We appreciate your support and we trust that you will enjoy this evening”.

In closing Deputy Minister, the late Steve Jobs, one of the most innovative thinkers of our time, summed it up well and when he said 'Innovation distinguishes between a leader and a follower.' Given our mandates as ATNS and TIA, we have a duty to lead the way. And this demands a constant focus on innovation. For innovation is not a list of projects or telephone numbers. It is a mind-set and a must.

Good Luck to all the nominees. For the simple reason that you are all in attendance here tonight, I consider you all to be winners! **Ends.**