

**JCCI President AGM December 2020 Speech**

by President Ms. Jacki Mpondo-Hendricks

It is with great pleasure and humility that I welcome all of you as our distinguished Council Members and supporters of the Chamber Movement. Our Board of Directors, Past Presidents, Honorary Members, Regional Chairpersons/Representatives, JCCI Members, Executives and staff members you are all well received at this unprecedented AGM. An AGM in the midst of a devastating world pandemic. A projected double-digit global trade contraction and a 5-year economic recovery trajectory. A current 52% unemployment rate in South Africa. The current Covid19 death toll at **22 206**.

We all know the challenging times that we face globally, the exposed vulnerabilities and inequalities, the uncertainty, the despair, the disruption, the personal and financial losses and the forceful push towards self-reflection and introspection and most importantly the appreciation of sacred breath. Covid19 threatens to take away our breath as a people, but in unity we will overcome.

Quoting Thabo Mbeki “Gloom and despondency have never defeated adversity. Trying times need courage and resilience. Our strength as a people is not tested during the best of times” but how we overcome the challenging times of distress.

As resilient business we too shall overcome and as a Chamber we will embrace the challenge to support business through these challenging times by strengthening our resolve to fulfill our Chamber mandate locally and globally in realizing the global vision for successful, vibrant, inclusive, socially conscious and business led economies. We specifically need to play an instrumental role in guiding and informing the implementation of the Covid19 economic recovery plans within our respective constituencies.

We are members of the ICC therefore we subscribe to:

**The ICC Centenary Declaration** -

An excerpt from the declaration signed in Paris, 28 May 2019.

“We proudly embrace our renewed purpose to enable business worldwide to secure peace, prosperity and opportunity for all. ICC in the 21st Century will question convention with courage and act boldly with the same conviction of our founders. It is our hope that in doing so, future generations will reflect on our contemporary achievements with the same reverence we bestow on our predecessors.”

**We are in Africa; therefore, we are guided by:**

The African Union 2063 Agenda: The Africa we want a transformed global powerhouse of the future by embracing the opportunities presented within the Africa Continental Free Trade Agreement.

**We are in South Africa, therefore supporting the ideals of the National Development Programme our common cause:**

In June 2019, the President asserted that “we must restore the NDP to its place at the Centre of our national effort, to make it alive, to make it part of the lived experience of the South African people”.

How are we as the JCCI leading the business response to current difficulties in the economy, weaknesses in the state and social ills and challenges affecting communities?

**We are in Gauteng, the province that contributes 35% towards SA GDP,** how are we as a Chamber aligned to take advantage of the following 10 high growth sectors as identified by Gauteng Provincial is the State of the Province Address?

* Energy, with a focus on new technologies and a diverse energy mix
* Transportation and Logistics
* ICT, Media and Digital Services – the Digital Economy
* Tourism and Hospitality
* Agri Food and Agri Business, focusing on value chains
* Construction and Infrastructure
* Automotive, Aerospace and Defense
* Financial Services
* Cultural and Creative Industries
* Industrialization of Cannabis

To quote Premier Makhura, “We are now at a crossroads, where we can either find pathways to inclusive growth and shared prosperity or descend further into the abyss of extreme poverty, unparalleled inequality and subsequent social unrest. The future of our country and our province is in our hands”.

**We are the economic custodians of the city and therefore The City of Joburg 2040 Vision becomes our collective aspiration** a clear vision, mission and framing paradigm and principles alongside outcomes, outputs and indicators.

Four major outcomes were identified:

Outcome 1: Improved quality of life and development driven resilience for all

Outcome 2: Provide resilient, live able, sustainable urban environment- underpinned by infrastructure supportive of a low carbon economy

Outcome 3: An inclusive, job intensive, resilient and competitive economy that harnesses the potential of citizens

Outcome 4: A high performing metropolitan government that proactively contributes to and is a sustainable, socially inclusive, locally integrated and globally competitive Gauteng Region.

**Memorandum of Association JCCI Objectives**

The main objectives for which the Chamber is established include amongst others:

* To promote and protect the collective interests of its members with reference to local and international trade
* To promote the development and growth of Broad based Black Economic Empowerment and the integration of previously disadvantaged sectors into mainstream economy
* To play an active role in making South and Southern Africa a better place in which to live, work and do business
* To express and publicise opinions and views on any such matters or questions as deemed advisable
* To provide a broad range of services to meet the needs of members

All still relevant in 2020 and underpinning the continued existence and relevance of the Chamber.

**2019/2020 Review**

The Council has been kept abreast the various challenges facing and threatening the sustainability of the Chamber.

These detailed in our Annual Report and will be presented by our Finance Committee representative.

In response to the challenge, a proactive decision was made to facilitate a strategy session with the Board and Finance Committee to chart a way forward for the Chamber beyond 2020.

The discussion was guided by the Chamber Mission Statement:

*Growing your business is our Business*

*We speak for business in our region, honestly, fearlessly and with authority.*

*We provide members with meaningful business intelligence, opportunities for growth and links to local and international partners, suppliers and markets.*

**Elements that were examined included but not limited to:**

* Stakeholders
* Products/Services
* Business Voice
* Relevance to Business
* Member Categories
* Communication Channels

A SWOT Analysis was done, and various recommendations were put forward including the inputs from the last Council Meeting that resulted in the identification of the Key Focus Areas for 2020 prior Covid19 which redirected the plans.

The 2019 change in City Administration from the DA led administration to an ANC led Coalition Administration halted all the intentions of signing a MOU with the City on 11 December 2019. A subsequent meeting between myself and the newly appointed MMC Phillips of Economic Development and his team on 27 January assured continued JCCI support and engagement. Effective December 2020 MMC Phillips replaced by ANC Appointee, Mr. Lawrence Khoza and the Johannesburg Business Forum to be relaunched as an effective business engagement platform in December 2020. The JCCI identified as a key stakeholder for the City Covid19 Recovery Plan and set to be consulted accordingly.

2020 As a consequence of Covid19 impact also saw the restructuring of the organization and the freezing of staff contracts.

We also saw the retirement of some key personnel including the eminent retirement of our CEO after years of dedicated service and commitment to the Chamber.

This will also ease into effect the transitional phase for handover to new office bearers to usher in an era for socio economic recovery.

We also mourn the loss of our Vice President, Ms. Margritt Wolff, our Midrand Region Manager Ben and all the others who have perished due to Covid19. We extend our heartfelt condolences to all their loved ones.

I was one of the fortunate that beat Covid19 after 2 weeks in hospital, collapsed lungs and 3 months of recovery. I therefore am testament of the human spirits resilience.

**2019/2020 has also presented a few celebratory highlights:**

A truly representative and transformed SA Rugby Team are the World Champions. The Miss Universe Crown rests on the head of a South African woman who once could have carried a water bucket in its place. We are undeniably a nation of champions.

* Historic Inauguration of 2 females at the helm of the Chamber, President and 1st Vice President. In leadership 3 Females, including CEO.
* Global Business Accelerator Programme – Extension of Scope and Funding for National Roll out and New Sector Incubation Programmes and a Woman’s Desk
* Establishment of the Association of South African Chambers – Nelson Mandela, Cape Town, Pietermaritzburg, Border Kei, Durban, George, Harrismith, Middelburg (7 bodies, 7 province, 7000 members, 850 000 employees) Joint Business Voice and representation to NERSA.
* A successful Annual Conference on Agro Processing
* Successful Inaugural Businesswomen’s Golf Day televised on NewsRoom Afrika
* Introduction of the Wellness and Beauty Cluster
* International MOU’s signed with Poland, Zimbabwe, Cuba and Taipei
* Local MOU’s Soweto Chamber and Circle of Global Businesswomen
* Various Webinars of Interest were hosted
* Ongoing International engagement through the Embassies and Global Sister Chambers
* Renovation of the 7th Floor
* Extended the reach and awareness of the Chamber into new markets and stakeholders

**The President’s 2019/2020 Recognition and Awards:**

* Zimbabwe Chamber of Commerce Special Award 2019
* KBN Special Recognition Award 2019
* Mail and Guardian 50 Most Powerful Women Award 2020
* SAWIL Southern Africa Trailblazer Finalist 2020
* Gauteng Provincial Basadi Awards 2020 Shortlist
* President Ramaphosa Marketing and Advertising Advisory Council Shortlist 2020

**2021/22 Vision and Beyond**

**Key Focus Areas:**

* Chamber Brand Relevance through Effective and Pervasive Marketing, PR and Communications including Social Media
* Membership Drive – Acquisition/ Retention/Growth
* Strategic Partnerships – Local, Continental and International
* Fundraising Activities through Events, Training and Programmes
* Stakeholder Engagements
* Transformation and Succession Planning
* Support Operational and Administrative Efficiencies

**Covid19 Key deliverable delays:**

* Conclude engagements of proposed R100m SMME Fund from uBank and SEFA (at finalization stage)
* Conclude City of Joburg/JCCI MOU (Change of leadership as well)
* Provide Consolidated JCCI Centenary Strategy for 2020 and beyond

**President Commitments**

Intention to spearhead a Presidential CSI and Outreach Programme called “Dignity is Ageless” which with the voluntary support of members will focus on 3 interventions:

1. Sanitary Pads Collection and Distribution to all impoverished areas within the City across all racial groups and Constituencies effective Q3 2020 ( Implemented through the JCCI President Covid19 Relief Programme sponsored by the Church of Jesus Christ Latter Day Saints, NBC in collaboration with the JCCI Branch Committee Members and JCCI Members, Misava Foods and Setsong Tea and supported by the City of Johannesburg Social Services, SAPS and various NGO’s and Inter Faith based organisations. Sanitization throughout Gauteng was facilitated for the Scientology Disaster Ministries. In 3 weeks, over 90000 meals, over 1500 sanitary pads and adult nappies during Lockdown Stage 5.
2. The Presidential Elders for insightful guidance on how to navigate the various business issues challenging our members at large as retired champions of industry effective Q4 2020. MOU to be signed with Germany based organization SES for the implementation of the programme.
3. Promoting Wings Programme for Boys – Filling the gaps for empty Father figures.

**Let us never forget the power of influence we have:**

* We reside in the City of dreams, the city of gold and the commercial heartbeat of the country
* We are custodians of the most powerful business voice in the Country
* We are South Africa’s biggest city and capital of the Gauteng Province, the wealthiest province in the country contributing 35% of the national GDP, R1,5 trillion making it the 7th largest economy in Africa
* We contribute 40% of the Gauteng GDP and 10% of the National GDP
* 10% of the National Employment which CoJ wants to increase to 12% within the next 18 months
* We boast Soweto Township, which was home to Nelson Mandela and Archbishop Desmond Tutu, both Nobel Peace Prize Winners
* Our 2020 Population estimated at 5.78 million with projected growth to 6.5 million by 2040
* We are a powerhouse…lets embrace such

*Ultimately, my vision for the Chamber supported by you, is for the Johannesburg Chamber of Commerce and Industry “To be the leading Chamber in Africa” as the reliable, dependable and responsive gateway to Africa. We now need to own it as our prescribed destiny.*

I thank you for your indulgence.