

# Africa, Asia should be investment hubs

 By [Paddy Hartdegen](#)

23 Sep 2011

The economies of Africa and Asia may be the key for growth in the global economy according to Maria Ramos, group chief executive of Absa. She told delegates attending the Discovery Leadership Summit that Africa and Asia have the potential to become the epicentre of the global economy.

She claims that 50 years ago Asia's economy was as poor as Africa's but by 2008 Asia's per capita income was double that of Africa.

Referring to China, Ramos says that country has doubled its per capita income every ten years for the past 30 years as it transformed from an agricultural and rural economy into a manufacturing giant.

She says that Africa is expected to grow at an average of seven percent a year over the next ten years making it the most rapidly growing continent in the world.

## Africa undergoing demographic transformation

Ramos says a key advantage for Africa is that it is undergoing a demographic transformation with rapid urbanisation, growing numbers of youth and high population growth.

She says this implies there will be a greater demand for goods and services representing increased opportunity and activity.

She urged the government and the private sector to invest in education, as this would aid economic growth and greater individual equity. She says that in South Africa, spending on education constitutes a large slice of the country's gross domestic product by international standards.

However she stressed that South Africa must find ways to "spend money effectively" to ensure that the education system plays a role in reducing structural unemployment and inequality.

More information on the [Discovery Invest Leadership Summit](#).

## ABOUT PADDY HARTDEGEN

Paddy Hartdegen has been working as a journalist and writer for the past 40 years since his first article was published in the *Sunday Tribune* when he was just 16-years-old. He has

written 13 books, edited a plethora of business-to-business publications and written for most of the major newspapers in South Africa.

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