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SA's economy under review

03/09/2003 15:18 - (SA)



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Johannesburg, Sept 3 (I-Net Bridge) - South Africa's socio- economic performance since 1994 will come under the spotlight at a forum to be held in Johannesburg next week.

The forum, to be held from September 8-10, is being jointly staged by Trade and Industrial Policy Strategies (TIPS) and the University of Cape Town's Development Policy Research Unit (DPRU).

Since 1994, the democratic government has embarked on a sustained economic reform process in virtually all spheres of the economic policy environment.

Notwithstanding some of these changes in policy orientation, South Africa's economic growth has been modest in the last decade, and remains insufficient to deal with the myriad of welfare and other backlogs society faces in the post-apartheid period, the organizers say.

Thus the 2003 forum - to be held at the Indaba Hotel near Fourways - aptly focuses on SA's progress in addressing the twin challenge of growth and poverty since democracy, they say.

For the past six years, TIPS has convened an Annual Policy Forum at which policy-relevant research is presented to senior policymakers and analysts from government, established academics from South and southern Africa, and internationally renowned keynote speakers.

By combining this year's forum with the DPRU's fourth annual conference that focuses on labour markets and poverty in SA, the scope of analysis has been broadened to take stock of the country's socio- economic performance over the last 10 years.

The three-day forum promises an exciting set of sessions - including an address by Minister of Finance Trevor Manuel at the Monday gala dinner - aimed at eliciting vigorous debate on policy-relevant issues resulting from research on economic growth and poverty in South Africa.

The internationally renowned economist Erik Thorbecke of Cornell University gives the keynote address on poverty analysis at the Monday plenary session, while Professor Dave Kaplan of the University of Cape Town will review SA's post-1994 industrial performance and policy.

Considering the issues of unemployment and HIV/Aids, Nicoli Nattrass, also of UCT, will address one of the most pertinent socio- democratic challenges facing SA, while a critical analysis of informal employment data and the constraints to growth and employment furthers the debate.

Social service delivery under government's GEAR programme as well as Black Economic Empowerment will also come under the spotlight.

A second plenary session on the Wednesday includes the University of Toronto's AI

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