

This is the first time the CTICC will be directly providing funds to support students with their studies. Not only is this another big step towards contributing to job creation and sustainability, but it also allows students from disadvantaged backgrounds the opportunity to make their dreams come true. Of this we couldn't be more proud.

## Investing in our own future to build our value proposition

Continuous investment is a non-negotiable in our business. As new convention centres emerge, established ones reinvest. To remain competitive, we must do the same. This year we have invested R29m in capital expenditure to maintain and upgrade our current CTICC West building – much of it to contain costs, benefit from new technologies and build sustainability into our business.

We also invested a further R351m in our new CTICC East expansion, which will open for business next year and create a substantially increased offering to our clients – another 10 000m<sup>2</sup> of conference and exhibition space, as well as a further 3 000m<sup>2</sup> of formal and informal meeting space.

However, our reinvestment is not just in capital expenditure. It is also in people – and this year we have chosen to focus in particular on the women who work with us. You will find stories of our investment in staff and suppliers on pages 68 to 70 and 72 to 73. And you will also discover that we have 18 women engineering students on our CTICC East construction site. At the CTICC, we seek to be the change as well as make the change.

Just one example of how we translate this into customer satisfaction is our rigorous independent customer satisfaction index (CSI) survey, which, at 84% this year, again exceeded our overall customer satisfaction target of 75% by almost 10%.

## Sustaining our success year on year

Sustainability and triple-bottom-line reporting remain integral to the way we do business. It is also part of the structure of this year's report as we have separate sections on economic contribution, environmental impact and social responsibility. They are all equally important and our metrics have improved in almost all of our sustainability parameters. We remain part of the UNGC initiatives that support responsible business and we have, yet again, reduced our electricity usage by almost 3% and our water consumption by a further 5%. These are particularly important figures in the face of rising energy costs and the ongoing drought.

## Looking outward, solving challenges and making plans

We have come to the end of another great year in the life of the CTICC. The year has not been without its challenges,

however. These include, inter alia, government policy and international healthcare codes of conduct that impact on conference attendance, visa regulations on travel into the country, poor economic conditions globally, rising food costs due largely to drought and the ever-rising costs of utilities. All of these factors have affected our business and impacted particularly on our delegate numbers. The CTICC saw a drop in delegate numbers as fewer delegates attended conferences and exhibitions. Furthermore, delegates remained for shorter periods, and, as a result, fewer may return as tourists.

Up to a point, we can strategise our way around these challenges, as our section Outlook: Embracing a global future on page 99 demonstrates. Our approach is a set of plans and aspirations through which we intend to fill our new CTICC East expansion and welcome our continent and the world to share it with us.

## Thank you

My second year as CEO of the CTICC has been one of consolidation and commitment to the future – for our centre, our people and the communities and stakeholders we serve. My sincere thanks go to the ever-dedicated CTICC Executive team and staff, as well as our suppliers whose commitment and dedication are the reason we are the success we are. It remains an honour and a privilege to lead such a loyal, enthusiastic and creative team.

Thank you, also, to the CTICC shareholders and the Board of Directors for your continued guidance and support over the past year.

Finally, my genuine appreciation goes to all our CTICC clients. Without you, there would be no CTICC: you are the reason we exist.

**Julie-May Ellingson**

Chief Executive Officer

