

**PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE S A  
CHAMBER OF BAKING TO THE JOINT ANNUAL GENERAL  
MEETING OF THE S A CHAMBER OF BAKING & NATIONAL  
CHAMBER OF MILLING ON 12 MARCH 2010**

Honoured guests, ladies and gentlemen

**1. INTRODUCTION**

Today, I feel like a citizen of Port-au-Prince in Haiti. The baking industry has concluded a year in which it had a major earthquake which caused a lot of damage and which almost destroyed the industry. Some of us are badly injured, some are wandering around in shock, some are even missing in action and some are seeking opportunities in the aftermath to look for a brighter future.

However it might be, the pictures sketched to us as members of the baking industry through the eyes and ears of the media, do not flatter the image of this industry.

The events of the past few years – with high food prices followed by an intense period of reports on collusion and anti-competitive behaviour – were devastating to the image of our industry. As members and leaders, we now have to take stock and plan for the future. We cannot just sit and wait for after shocks and foreign aid whilst doing nothing. There is a nation out there awaiting the delivery of their daily bread.

What we can do as a collective is to fit the pieces that are left together and start building a new future! Trust is something you have to earn and we have to win it back from the consumers and Government.

**2. INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY**

One of the first building blocks we put down was the conclusion that we still need a Chamber to assist with rebuilding the future. It might be in a different format but we are absolutely convinced that the need for co-operation by our members in areas such as training, technical matters and liaison with Government and other stakeholders is also to the benefit of society at large.

Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to stress that we cannot change history but we can do something about our future. It is illegal to collude, full stop, but it is not illegal to co-operate in areas where industry, Government and consumers are all winners!

I would therefore like to call on the leaders in our industry to remain calm and level-headed and step forward to assist us in not only shaping the future of our Chamber but also a better South Africa. Food security as a policy outcome cannot be delivered without a bread inside the basket!

The Chamber of Baking was under permanent construction since the industry was deregulated in 1991. At least this is a familiar process to us! One characteristic of a vibrant industry association is a conducive environment where changes are welcomed. This is what our predecessors did since 1991 when the plug was pulled on regulation. They showed us how to survive in times of change. Let's live up to the challenge in order for the next generations to say the same of us.

It has therefore been decided to revisit our Constitution to meet the needs of our members and challenges of the day.

### **3. OPERATIONAL MATTERS**

Each week more and more indicators are published that increase our hopes that the recession is over. Our bread sales data indicates that consumers are gradually returning to bread. With the current excellent maize crop we expect maize meal to be very competitively priced in the year ahead of us, but if consumers have more Rands in their pockets, I am sure we will see the benefits in our volumes.

I expect that the year ahead will also force the industry to up its game as far as food safety is concerned. I would therefore like to challenge our technical team to embrace the opportunity to ensure that we live up to the expectations of our customers.

The road traveled by our training experts in the industry was also characterized by a few potholes that we had to overcome but we have seen a very positive outcome in a record number of candidates (153) that completed our examinations in October 2009. To the training team and Isobel, you are inspiring us – keep up the good work and keep your focus to train our workforce to ensure food security.

The financial position of the Chamber is sound and healthy and decisions were taken to fill the void left by the resignation of Blue Ribbon.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

In conclusion I would like to thank the Chairpersons of the Standing Committees for their dedication and loyalty towards this industry. We will count on your leadership, guidance and commitment to carry us through this phase. To my colleagues in the management team – thanks for hanging in there with me.

The Chamber has elected Mr Philip Coetzer of Sunbake to lead our organisation for the next year and I would like to wish him well. I am not jumping ship here, but will serve in the capacity of Vice-President in the year to come.

I would like to take this opportunity of thanking Blue Ribbon and their staff for the contributions they made over the years. It was a sad moment when a founding member of this Chamber back in 1938 decided to terminate its membership. I trust the circumstances that forced them to take such a drastic decision will change in the future for them to reconsider joining us again.

Lastly, I would like to thank the Chamber staff for keeping the ship steady in the harbour during this storm.

**VASU MOODLEY**  
PRESIDENT: S A CHAMBER OF BAKING

12 March 2010