



# PROGRESS, PRIORITIES, AND PARTNERSHIPS AT GCCA AFRICA CONFERENCE

Johannesburg hosts GCCA Africa's cold chain conference.

**A**frica is experiencing a transformation as extreme population growth strains the capacity to store and deliver fresh, safe food to every community. The demand for food puts pressure on all parts of the supply chain, but especially on the overlooked backbone of the entire system: the cold chain.

The GCCA Africa Cold Chain Conference's 2026 theme, "Progress, Priorities, and Partnerships," brings together regional cold store operators, controlled-environment builders, equipment suppliers, and service providers to discuss the present and future of African logistics.

Speakers include economic forecasters and cold chain and tech leaders detailing the trends reshaping the temperature-controlled industry. From shifting trade corridors to the next leap in climate-smart infrastructure, the Africa Cold Chain Conference provides

needed insights on complex challenges and practical solutions.

## Convening in Johannesburg

Hosted at Johannesburg's Fairway Hotel, Spa & Golf Resort on September 2-3, the event will build on last year's successful conference in Durban and provide a platform to share knowledge and build stronger networks across the continent.

At the 2025 program, Minister John Steenhuisen addressed similar themes of "priorities and partnerships" in the sector, including the relationships needed to build rural access to

food and the necessary collaboration with the Department of Energy and Electricity. "We cannot build a cold chain on shaky foundations," says the Minister. "Reliable, affordable, and sustainable energy must underpin everything. And in doing so, we also align with our climate change commitments, proving that food security and sustainability are not opposites, but partners."

Steenhuisen adds, "When government, agribusiness, and logistics companies collaborate to expand cold chain networks into rural areas, the effect is transformative. It means fewer losses and new jobs in packing houses, trucking, and storage facilities. This is smart economics. Rural cold chain access is rural development in action."

New partnerships like these are already reshaping temperature-controlled storage and transport.

"GCCA's priorities in Africa include finding solutions to barriers that affect day-to-day operations. The Port of Durban is one

example. Along with Transnet Port Terminals (TPT) and Transnet Freight Rail (TFR), GCCA is supporting a Durban-Johannesburg reefer rail pilot to enhance efficiency and reduce detrimental congestion at the Port,” says Adam Thocher, Senior Vice President, Global Programs and Insights for GCCA.

“Another great example is the collaboration in GCCA Africa’s Food Safety and Compliance Committee,” adds Thocher. “GCCA members discuss the regulations impacting the cold chain logistics and storage in South Africa, building stronger relationships between industry and government agencies. Currently, the members are undertaking a gap analysis of the Kenya Meat Act with the South Africa Meat Safety Act to begin development of new standards.”

### Strong Speaker Lineup

This year’s conference involves a mix of trade, investment, infrastructure, and logistics professionals. Notable speakers include representatives from DP World, Trade Research Advisory (Pty) Ltd., South African Association of Freight Forwarders, and the Centre for Risk Analysis (CRA).

Confirmed speakers include Brent Melvin, RSA Logistics Dubai; Dr. John Deng Diar Diing, Executive Secretary of the Northern Corridor Transit and Transport Coordination Authority (NCTTCA); Dr. Ikechukwu Opara, University of the Western Cape, and others.

### Growth Across the Sector

The World Bank has stated that Africa’s food market, valued at about \$313 billion a year in 2013, could triple by 2030 with the right investments in infrastructure, smart busi-

ness, and trade policies – cold chain growth is driven by rising demand for these perishable foods, along with pharmaceuticals and biotechnology products.


The spread of e-commerce and online food delivery is also putting extra emphasis on the need for cold chain investment.

“GCCA’s 2026 Africa Cold Chain Conference couldn’t come at a more critical time. This event brings together the people and partnerships needed to ensure Africa’s cold chain future is built on collaboration, innovation, and resilience,” says Sara Stickler, GCCA President and CEO.

### Register Now

Additional programming and speakers will be announced throughout the summer, and registration for the 2026 Johannesburg event is open at [www.gcca.org/events/gcca-african-cold-chain-conference](http://www.gcca.org/events/gcca-african-cold-chain-conference). 

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