

## **Welcome address by Mike Lomas**

### **ICE Council Member & ICE Country Representative for South Africa**

Good Morning Ladies & Gentleman and a warm welcome to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Middle East and African Convention.

A special welcome to the ICE President , Paul Jowitt and to the four Past Presidents of the South African Institution of Civil Engineers who are with us today. Welcome to our international guests from throughout Africa and the Middle East.

The current SAICE President, Ali Naidu, had bereavement in the family and sends his apologies as he is unable to be with us today. Mr Faried Alli will present Ali Naidu's paper on his behalf.

The 1<sup>st</sup> MEA Convention was held in Cairo in 2008. In a short space of time since that event we have the huge negative impact of the financial crisis and the anguish it has brought to millions of people around the world. We are now feeling the very real impacts of climate change, and the population has increased by 170 million, most of which are not like you and I, but are destined to poverty.

Solutions to the challenges facing the engineering and built environment professionals are both urgent and critical. The need for us to step up to the plate as a civil engineering profession and address the infrastructure backlog is crucial.

Many of you will have travelled from Cape Town airport here to the CBD. You will have seen the growing sprawl of shacks resulting from the immigration of job seekers to the urban environment – yet when we look at the city we see a world class soccer stadium – this dichotomy we see throughout all emerging economies.

The purpose of today, through presentation, interaction and discussion is to bring some fresh thinking to the “means of accelerating delivery infrastructure”– whilst at the same time we must look to positively influence the societies, and people’s lives, in the areas where we work.

Today would not be possible without the willingness of our speakers to give of their valuable time and present to us today. We really appreciate it.

Special thanks to the Joint Civils Division Organising Committee for enthusiastically making this conference possible.

And finally to our sponsors for supporting the Convention “Accelerating Infrastructure Delivery – Improving the Quality of Life”.

THANK YOU