

## Johannesburg in Top 50 Commerce Hubs

Johannesburg has been ranked 47th out of 50 cities worldwide in a new study of the centres of commerce that shape the global economy.

The findings of the study, the MasterCard Worldwide Centres of Commerce Index, were presented in Johannesburg this week.

Compiled from research by a panel of eight independent economic, urban development and social science experts from leading academic institutions around the world, the index explores the strategic role that cities play in driving the global economy.

Based on six measurement dimensions consisting of over 100 data points, the index assesses the legal and political framework, the economic stability, the ease of doing business, the financial flow, the business centre capabilities, and the knowledge creation and information flow of the world's 50 leading cities.

Occupying first position in the index is London, followed by New York, Tokyo, Chicago and Hong Kong. Completing the top 10 are Singapore, Frankfurt, Paris, Seoul and Los Angeles.

Johannesburg's highest ranking was in the "financial flow" dimension, where the city was ranked 26th. The city also scored high in the "ease of doing business" dimension, where it was ranked 33rd. However, it scored low for "economic stability" and "knowledge creation and information flow".

Speaking at the presentation in Johannesburg, MasterCard Worldwide's general manager for Africa, Eddie Grobler, said the city's ranking "demonstrates its position as a continental hub. As the city with the highest ranking in Africa, Johannesburg's ranking tells an amazing growth story."

Parks Tau, a member of the city's mayoral committee for finance and economic development, said Johannesburg had increased its capital investment significantly over the past five years.

"There has been considerable growth in government-led public investment to support growth in the city, along with a concerted effort by the City, in partnership with the private sector, to develop the city," Tau said.

At the same time, Tau said there were areas where the city could improve, especially public transport. This would change for the better with the introduction of a bus rapid transit system, which would give Johannesburg a "safe and reliable" transport system.

Mike Schussler, senior economist at T-Sec, said Johannesburg would also have to improve its knowledge base and its network capabilities if it was to succeed in the broader game of global growth and city wealth.

"We do, however, know that between now and 2010, continued capital investment is planned by the City of Johannesburg for areas such as business process outsourcing, tourism and its public transport infrastructure," Schussler said.

"These investments, coupled with increased attention from the City on law enforcement and traffic congestion, will enable Johannesburg to improve its position as a world centre of commerce significantly."