



MATI 18th AGM

Time: 0930hrs

Date: 21st January 2008

Venue: MATI Convention Hall

Chairman's Address **Mr. M U Maniku**

1. I am delighted and proud to welcome you to the 18th Annual General Meeting of MATI.
2. This new building in which we meet today is our own.
3. It reflects our lasting commitment to MATI that began as an idea and has, over 25 years, evolved into a professional body of people with common and shared aspirations and goals.
4. MATI is the conduit and clearing-house through which the collective position, needs and priorities of the tourism industry are channeled to government, legislature and media.
5. Our role and responsibility have undergone many changes in line with the changing needs of the tourism industry and the impact of source markets on our businesses.
6. Through the years we have assumed maturity and leadership, changing from mere representation to socially-responsible enterprises growing with the economy and contributing to the local economy; in recognition of the status of tourism as the biggest industry in the country. The highest volume of investments is also, clearly, in this sector.
7. It goes without saying, therefore, that our investments need protection in the fast-changing political climate in the country. Above all else, our businesses must be given the freedom and protection to operate as viable, vibrant enterprises, with allowance for reasonable profits. Businesses can be sustained only if they are profitable. We cannot ignore that fact.
8. The months ahead will be extremely challenging for the country and for tourism. There is no doubt about that. What we must not allow will be the sacrifice of the tourism

industry for short-term political expediency; no matter who holds the reins of government, or whichever party comes to power.

9. Businesses must be given the concessions to operate with the freedom and confidence to make their own choices for their long term stability. The stability of the country depends on this.
10. This would require that business and government work together in partnership and shared purpose. The process of close consultation that the industry has had with the government in the past is gradually being eroded, with MATI now being, largely, sidelined in important decision-making on matters related to tourism development and management. This attitude is detrimental to the country and must soon be reversed.
11. MATI is an organization encompassing the collective practical knowledge and experience of over 35 years of resort-building and tourism development and management. That is what we have on offer.
12. Major decisions on tourism development cannot be made on an ad-hoc basis to meet immediate and pressing needs of the government without considering long term consequences.
13. MATI as a body must stand firm and united, more than ever, in its pursuit of easier terms of doing business and seeking better protection of our investments and our businesses.

Thank You.
