

# UK's thumbs-up to South Africa

**CONFIDENCE:** INVESTMENT LIKELY TO CONTINUE

» **Britain's trade commissioner for Africa says country is moving in the 'right direction'.**

**T**he United Kingdom's trade commissioner for Africa, Emma Wade-Smith, said yesterday the UK had full confidence in South Africa's "stimulus package" and was more likely to continue to invest in the country, despite its troubled economy going through a technical recession.

President Cyril Ramaphosa last month announced wide-ranging economic recovery measures, including the creation of a R400 billion infrastructure fund, in a bid to attract investment from the private sector and create much-needed jobs.

Speaking on the sidelines of the Infrastructure Africa Business

Investment Forum, Wade-Smith said that the recent state visit to South Africa by UK Prime Minister Theresa May demonstrated that economic ties between the UK and South Africa had endured because the country was moving in the "right direction".

"I have very strong faith in this and I think what we are seeing is that the fundamentals of South Africa's economy are broadly strong and we have huge amounts of UK's investment here," said Wade-Smith.

"We are the largest foreign investor here and have been for many years. That is because we have belief in South Africa. It's an extraordinary economy – diverse, mature – and has so much going for it.

"Governments have a really crucial role to play in creating a right environment to enable business to happen. I think this stimulus package and the strong

messages we are hearing from the president and his ministers is a confidence boost for the international business community.

"And because we've already got such a strong business and personal relationship between the UK and South Africa, I am confident we will see continued investment here.

"South Africa and many other economies on the continent are moving in the right direction and are absolutely the place for our companies to do business and invest."

The UK is currently the second largest investor in Africa with £45 billion (about R879 billion) a year, while the value of the trading relationship between the UK and Africa stood at more than £31 billion.

Wade-Smith said the UK wanted its trade and investment partnership with Africa to be built around shared prosperity and shared security. – ANA

