

such as existed in the USA during the Depression. The black communities need electrification, on a sensible, affordable, pay before you use basis. I will not depress you with arguments that business as usual will bring against these initiatives. Survival is battered to its knees and becomes a dull hangover, heavy with memories of the good time we had last night.

In this environment of euphoric apathy, technology has been cast in the role of the oppressor's tool. Technology and automation is seen as the enemy of the people, a destroyer of jobs.

Nothing could be further from the truth. The fallacy in these arguments lie in a basic misunderstanding regarding profit. Profit is viewed as a mysterious but large amount of money, generated by exploited workers but appropriated by overweight middle-aged men driving Mercedes Benz motorcars with automatics gearboxes which allow them to talk on their carphones in heavy traffic. But I digress. The scenario painted above may very well be true in many or even all cases. But it is not the important part of the story. The important part comes next - the above unsavory character, in his unseemly greed, lusts after more profit, and reinvests this money in the economy - providing jobs and income. In the very worst case, he simply spends the profit. In this way, he allows somebody else to make a profit, and so the cycle continues. The point is

that profit is investment waiting to happen, and for investment to be successful we need improved quality and productivity and hence technology.

I was fortunate enough to be the guest of one of the giant Japanese firms in March of this year. There I saw, in a country which has a great need to employ its millions, the most highly automated process. When I enquired about this seeming anomaly, my hosts explained that quality and productivity drove the need for automation. They could see no future in creating employment which would drive the company bankrupt through poor productivity and quality. Paradoxically, this approach has created wealth and opportunity for all in Japan. Similar transformations, economic miracles really, are taking place amongst the so-called Four Tigers of the East - Singapore, Hong Kong Taiwan and Korea.

As is usual when they open the cage and allow technologists to speak in public, I have spoken about everything but computers. Perhaps this is because computers are so boring but I must confess that after more than twenty years I still get a tremendous thrill from technology. I have four personal computers, one at home, one in my briefcase and two on my desk. These I often use simultaneously - well, almost - because after all these years and all these advances, they still have not made a computer that can keep up with the marvellous one between our ears.



Advancing technology has created a global village which is shrinking every day. It has created a village where many of the inhabitants have secure, fulfilling and creative employment, and where their personal lives are made comfortable, productive and enjoyable by the benefits of technology.

Of course, this village is not perfect. Some of our neighbours are not as fortunate as others. In some cases this has been due to the imposition of social and economic measures which could never work. In other cases, our neighbours' growth has been stunted by discriminatory measures based on race or religion or whatever characteristic. However, they are living in the same shrinking village, and they can look over the fence and we can look over the fence and say - Let me help you.

Our village is shrinking at an amazing pace. communication and access to information is becoming easier, faster, cheaper and more accessible by the day. Technology makes this possible. In the New South Africa, we will need to harness knowledge and technology to the fullest extent possible if we are to make a success of our transition to democracy.

We will have to harness our knowledge, ingenuity and technology to

improve the education process by an order of magnitude. Through the leverage of technology we must educate millions using a few thousand educators. Flesh and blood alone will not achieve this task. We will have to discard conventional wisdom and implement radically different solutions.

We will have to harness our knowledge, ingenuity and technology to provide the rewards of the free market system to our less fortunate neighbours. We will have to find ways to encourage entrepreneurs and intrapreneurs to take risks which lead to wealth creation and job opportunities for all.

We will have to harness our knowledge, ingenuity and technology to maintain and improve our environment. Pollution is not going to go away magically on the day the New South Africa dawns. Unfortunately our many political, social and economic problems have tended to push this, perhaps the most serious and intractable problem of all, into the background. Can we really afford to wait for our political problems to be resolved before we look around us?

There is much work ahead. I plead with you to start now. You have the power. Change things now. Above all, do not be afraid. There is nothing to fear but fear itself.



The Second Law of Thermodynamics:

If you think things are in a mess now, just wait