

China's Impact on African Employment: What Do We Know and Where are the Gaps?

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Guest Speaker Bio

Bernard Cassar



Bernard is one of a select few who can say that they have travelled to every country on the Continent of Africa.

“I am a positive African and proud to be so”

A Maltese Capetonian, born and bred, Bernard schooled at Christian Brothers College, matriculating in 1975. He graduated in Hotel Management at the old WITS Technikon (School of Tourism and Hospitality) before joining the Trust Hotel Group in 1979. It was there in 1984, that the Protea Hotel Group, now the largest hotel group in Africa, was formed. As Hotel Operator, Bernard specialised in opening hotels throughout South Africa and the African continent.

Over the nearly 30 years he was with the Group, Bernard worked his way up from being a management trainee to a Board Director and shareholder, until his semi-retirement in 2007. He is a hotel operator at heart, having held the position of General Manager of multiple hotels throughout South Africa and Swaziland. He has operated country resorts, city centre hotels, game lodges and casinos. Bernard was appointed to the Board of Directors of the Protea Hotel Group in the mid-nineties, responsible for the Cape Region – some 60 hotels.

As Regional and Africa Director, Bernard was given authority for the Group's Africa expansion, fulfilling a passion he had had since the mid-eighties. He specialized in West Africa, especially Nigeria, yet the portfolio involved expanding the Protea Group into most of Africa: covering Botswana, DRC, Egypt, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Bernard also furthered his education in the U.S., studying hotel management at Cornell University in Upstate New York, and quality service standards at the Disney University in Orlando.

On retiring, he decided to follow his passions of family life, travel, heritage, hospitality education and conservation. Bernard still consults for the Protea Hotel Group, the Bon Hotel Group and the Mantis Hotel Group, advising on industry matters, African Affairs, and strategic expansion; he also conducts courses in Hospitality General Manager training. Bernard assisted the University of Cape Town during the 2010 Football World Cup and visits UCT often, as a guest lecturer.

“Having had a very successful and satisfying career, I now enjoy sharing my experience and expertise in an effort to basically ‘put back’ into the industry that has served me so well,” he says.

Bernard is the Hon. Consular General for the island of Malta, and he is currently opening a consulate in Rondebosch, Cape Town.