



**economic development
& tourism**

MPUMALANGA PROVINCE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MEDIA STATEMENT

Date: Wednesday, 06 October 2021

Attention: Journalists, News Editors and Executive Producers

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEC MKHATSHWA ENGAGES SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MINISTER, MS STELLA NDABENI-ABRAHAMS

Mbombela – MEC for Finance, Economic Development and Tourism, Mr Vusi Mkhathswa, says small businesses are the backbone of Mpumalanga’s economy, and as such, government will continue to nurture and maximise support to them for a meaningful impact. MEC Mkhathswa said this during a meeting with the Small Business Development Minister, Ms Stella Ndabeni-Abrahams, last night.

“There is enough evidence to confirm that small businesses are the main contributors to the growth of the economy of the Province; hence my quest is to support and revive township and rural economies. I am already on the ground, engaging our small businesses through the SMME Roadshows, that seek to understand the experiences and challenges faced by SMMEs, and to further empower them through information dissemination.

“Minister, we appreciate the continued collaboration and support we receive from your Department’s agencies; namely, SEDA (Small Enterprise Development Agency) and SEFA (Small Enterprise Finance Agency, and other development finance institutions, like our own MEGA (Mpumalanga Economic Growth Agency), that have joined us on the roadshows, without fail”, added the MEC.

Mr Mkhathswa also expressed his appreciation to the Department of Small Business Development (DBSD) and its agencies, which has resulted in quite a high number of small businesses in our Province, receiving financial and non-financial support and assistance from government’s development finance institutions.

The engagement was the first since the deployment of Ms Ndabeni-Abrahams, as the Small Business Development Minister, following the reshuffle of the national executive (cabinet) by President Cyril Ramaphosa on 05 August 2021. It was convened at the request of the Minister, as a meet-and-greet engagement, and to update each other on the collaborative work done by the two (2) departments in supporting small businesses in Mpumalanga.

“MEC, I am happy that your Province has even developed the Economy Recovery Plan which I believe will benefit small businesses. As the Department of Small Business Development, we commit that we will continue to complement the work you are doing in supporting small businesses in Mpumalanga. We are also busy crafting the Small Business Development Masterplan for recovery, and we will soon consult you for inputs”, explained Ms Ndabeni-Abrahams.

The Minister further encouraged the Department to invest in infrastructure roll-out in townships and rural areas; indicating that this will benefit and propel the growth of small businesses. Ms Ndabeni-Abrahams added that small businesses should equally benefit from contracts awarded for the maintenance of such infrastructure, if they are to meaningfully benefit from available economic opportunities.

“Collaboratively, we can contribute to the growth of our economy, if we invest in SMMEs. I strongly believe that we must invest in the roll-out of infrastructure in our townships and rural areas; and further believe that township and rural economies must be driven by our SMMEs. Undoubtedly, the growth of our economy is dependent on SMMEs”, concluded the Minister.

ENDS

Issued by the Department of Economic Development and Tourism

For enquiries contact: Dr Mohau Ramodibe (Head of Communication) | 060 989 4678 | mohauram@mpg.gov.za or Ms Xolile Nkabinde (MEC's Media Liaison Officer) | 071 222 7096 | xolilenkabinde2@gmail.com