

## ADDRESS BY THE MEC FOR FINANCE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM, MR VUSI MKHATSHWA, MPL, ON THE OCCASION OF THE SMALL ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (SEDA) POP-UP MARKET HELD IN SECUNDA, GOVAN MBEKI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

Thursday, 25 November 2021

Programme Director;

Our host, the Executive Mayor of the Govan Mbeki Local Municipality;

Municipal Manager of Gert Sibande District Municipality;

Acting Municipal Manager of the Govan Mbeki Local Municipality;

Acting HOD of the Department of Economic Development and Tourism, Ms Gugu Mashiteng;

Chairperson of the SEDA (Small Enterprise Development Agency) Board;

Acting CEO of SEDA;

CEO of SEFA (Small Business Finance Agency);

Sasol Senior Vice President;

Government and other SEDA officials present;

Members of the media;

Ladies and gentlemen;

### ***Good morning!***

1. It is indeed my utmost pleasure and honour, to have been invited to this all-important event – the annual **SEDA Pop-up Market** – right here in our Province, the province of the rising sun.
2. Programme Director; this Pop-up Market as organized by the Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA), coincides with the start of the **16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence** campaign of 2021,

and we shall accordingly be part of the campaign in mobilizing voices to act and speak-out against this scourge.

3. In the context of the Pop-up Market, as Mpumalanga, we strongly support this event, as we believe it is a great platform that will strategically facilitate an exposure of our SMMEs and cooperatives to markets. We extend our appreciation to the **Chairperson and acting CEO of SEDA**, for coming up with such a life-changing empowerment event. Thank you very much.
4. Chairperson; there is adequate proof to confirm that **small businesses and co-operatives play a critical and huge role in the growth of our economy**. They might be considered to be small, but in fact, small businesses are the new 'big businesses and they actually contribute disproportionately to the GDP of the country; hence their support and development becomes sacrosanct.
5. Statistics indicate that **small businesses have the potential, and create more jobs; and contribute to economic growth more than the so-called big businesses**, which are often referred to as formal businesses.
6. Although viewed as informal, **small businesses and co-operatives drive our economy**; hence our government is determined to nurture and support them at all times.
7. As such, I have decided to be biased towards **reviving rural and township economies**, which are mostly led by what we call informal businesses. Undoubtedly, I strongly believe that our people in rural and

township areas can contribute meaningfully to job creation and economic growth.

8. Programme Director; It is against this background, that we fully support today's event, whose objectives are: (1) **to facilitate access to market for SMMEs and cooperatives in various business sectors;** (2) **to improve service access;** and (3) **to create brand awareness and offerings** of the Department of Small Business Development, our Department, SEDA and SEFA, including our Public Entity, MEGA.
9. We commend SEDA, for having **prioritized the youth and women-owned small businesses and cooperatives**, to be part of this Pop-up Market event. As such, a **total of 51 SMMEs and cooperatives** are participating in the Pop-up market. Out of this number, **twenty-seven (27) are women-owned and twenty-four (24) are youth-owned**. And overall, 48 of them are black-owned.
10. By mentioning the race, we are actually stressing that black-owned small businesses are also continuing to receive market exposure, which will lead to them entering the mainstream economy.
11. Through this event, taking place under the theme: **“Show Your Love for Local Brands”**, we are actually confirming that local is indeed ‘*lekker*’; we are indeed confirming that local products and brands are quality products; hence we urge you to buy local, so that we can support the growth of our SMMEs and cooperatives.

12. When you buy local, you are not merely contributing to the growth of the informal and small business sector, but you are also **contributing to increasing employment opportunities** for our people.
13. I believe we are all aware of the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on our economy, which has left quite a number of our people jobless. This has led to some of the businesses closing their doors permanently, and a lot of people losing their livelihoods. Therefore, if you buy local, you will not only **“Show Your Love for Local Brands”**, but you will be assisting to reverse the job losses experienced, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
14. Programme Director; our quest as government, is to promote the culture of entrepreneurship, and to develop small enterprises and cooperatives by providing **customized, financial and non-financial business support services that will result in business growth, sustainability and viability** of the informal sector, amongst others.
15. This we do, because we strongly believe that, when we increase the number of entrepreneurs, we will surely **decrease unemployment, especially amongst the youth who are in the majority**, and subsequently deal with the triple challenges which include poverty and inequality.
16. Over the next three (3) days of this Pop-up market, the **selected SMMEs and cooperatives will be showcasing their quality products**, and we urge you to visit their stalls to see what they have to offer to you. Without

doubt, I can confirm that their products are of high quality, and you would not be disappointed if you elect to support them by buying their products.

17. Programme Director; as I close, I would like to reiterate that **small businesses are actually big businesses**, given their immense contribution to job creation and economic growth. They are big businesses because they employ quite a large number of people, compared to the so-called big businesses.
18. Thusly, we have an ongoing and immediate task, as government and our stakeholders in the private sector, to create a conducive environment, through the availability of opportunities, for the small businesses to rise and thrive, and ultimately create the much-needed jobs and undermine the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, which has wreaked havoc to the people and the economy.
19. Of significance, is to indicate that there is a tome of literature which proves that the sustainability and success of SMME discourse of any country, is about building robust entrepreneurial ecosystem to drive productivity growth, create new employment and increase innovation.
20. We will use the newly introduced District Development Model (DDM) approach in the context of intergovernmental relations, to work together with municipalities across the Province, in a more coordinated manner to drive the development of the small business sector.
21. ***Let's Grow Mpumalanga Together*** by empowering small businesses!

I thank you!