

# Official opening of the **Limpopo Earthmoving and Construction Equipment Company**

The Minister for the Department of Small Business Development (DSBD), Ms Stella Ndabeni-Abrahams in together with the Small Enterprise Finance Agency (sefa) and Small Enterprise Development Agency (Seda) officiated the opening of Limpopo Earthmoving and Construction Equipment (LECE) which opened its doors to the public following years of toiling. The momentous occasion was held on 06 October 2023 at LECE firm, Polokwane.

Local entrepreneurs were honoured during the official opening of the Limpopo Earthmoving and Construction Equipment (LECE), and they were reminded that more empowerment, investments, and mentorship of small businesses are still far off the mark, and a lot still needs to be done for them to thrive and occupy their rightful spaces in the ecosystem. The Small Business Development Portfolio highlighted the need to encourage more entrepreneurs to work hard so that they can retain positions of influence both in society and in business. The Department of Small Business Development is driven by the mandate to lead and coordinate an integrated approach to promotion and development of Small, Micro and Medium Enterprises (SMMEs) and Co-operative, and ensure an enabling legislative and policy environment to support their growth and sustainability. The execution of this mandate will lead to a transformed economy, increased employment, and reduction of poverty and inequality.

Minister Ndabeni-Abrahams hectic schedule took her up north along the massive N1 Highway to Polokwane to officiate the opening of the Limpopo Earthmoving and Construction Equipment (LECE). She expressed delight at seeing a black owned establishment breaking barriers and providing valuable services to the community as well as creating jobs for the local's population providing the much-needed experiential training to

mechanical engineering students from the local TVETS and universities.

"Speaking at this momentous occasion is an extraordinary honour, and a special privilege as we celebrate yet another success story of black business. We are here to celebrate the triumph of vision and resilience," said Minister Ndabeni-Abrahams.

"Indeed, the story of the Limpopo Earthmoving Construction Equipment (LECE) is a proud story of black business. It is a story of entrepreneurs who decided to grab opportunities and take their destiny into their own hands. It is a practical expression of Vuk'zenzele! By putting their collective shoulder to the wheel, the LECE team has demonstrated to all of us what happens when vision meets opportunity and determination. The construction industry constitutes one of the central pillars of our Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan (ERRP)," Minister Ndabeni-Abrahams added.





The Limpopo Earthmoving Construction Equipment (LECE) is the only dealership that is licensed and authorised by Hitachi Industrial Equipment Solutions America (HIESA) in Limpopo Province. Its licensing will benefit local industries and farmer as well industries beyond the Limpopo River in neighboring countries like Zimbabwe and Mozambique.

“We view the construction industry as a critical partner in the reconstruction and development of our country. The Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) is at the heart of our attempts to create jobs, deliver services, eradicate poverty, and upskill our people. For the programme to succeed, the role of the construction sector remains critical.”

“The construction of appropriate infrastructure such as roads and bridges are at the center of our programmes to attract investment. Government’s capacity to meet its infrastructure delivery targets such as clinics, schools and houses depends almost entirely on the responsiveness and performance of this sector,” added Minister Ndabeni-Abrahams.

“Recent GDP figures have demonstrated that the latest growth makes South Africa’s economy bigger than pre-Covid. This means that the economy is now larger than it was before the

pandemic. The two million jobs that were lost following the devastating impact of the Covid-19 pandemic have largely been recovered”.

“As I say all these things, I remain painfully aware that companies such as LECE operate in an economic environment where the playing field is not yet level. Our observation is that the construction sector, like many others, continues to reflect inequalities and imbalances in ownership and management. The participation of black people and women is only marginal. Not so long ago, black businesses were relegated to the periphery of the mainstream economy,” decried Minister Ndabeni-Abrahams.

Minister Ndabeni-Abrahams further narrated the liberation rally call for black emancipation as well as meaningful participation in the mainstream economy.

“For its part, government will do whatever it takes to promote access to economic opportunities for all historically marginalized people of our country to give practical meaning to the pledge we made during our struggle for liberation. We are doing all of this because we are aware that the democratic breakthrough would be meaningless if it is not accompanied with a vibrant and growing economy that can benefit all our people” she added.



The Department used the official opening of Limpopo Earthmoving Construction Equipment to promote its programmes. The IMEDP programme provide businesses with opportunities to grow and become part of a more inclusive economy where the exhibitors had the opportunity to sell their products and promote their businesses. The Department and its agencies Seda and sefa made sure that present local members were provided with the information about the offers of the Departments programmes on the exhibition stand, offerings like The Youth Challenge Fund (YCF) which is a youth start-up support programme intended to stimulate the establishment and growth of youth-owned businesses, SheTradesZA improves access to investment for women-owned enterprises and promote business opportunities. The Township and Rural Empowerment Programmes (TREP) supports informal, micro, and small enterprises and cooperatives in the rural and township economies.

Executive Mayor of Polokwane Local Municipality, Councilor Makoro John Mpe called on the business community of the province to support the Limpopo Earthmoving Construction Equipment (LECE) and not take their products to Gauteng for repairs.

Councillor Mpe reiterated the need to provide support to black businesses as they are the cornerstone of economic success.

Limpopo Earthmoving Construction Equipment (LECE) is the brainchild of Mr. Brian Munetsi, who is also the founder and now director of the business.

"I toiled like everybody else looking for funding after drafting my business proposal. As someone from a mechanical engineering background, starting such an enterprise made business as well as economic sense as I'm familiar with the terrain and territory," said Mr. Munetsi.

Hitachi Construction Machinery Managing Director for Southern Africa, Tetsuya Ozawa promised to support LECE with everything it needs to succeed "As it is not company to allow franchisees to fail because of lack of support from our Head Office," said Mr. Ozawa.

Mr. Tetsuya Ozawa called on local businesses and mining houses to make use of LECE facilities and support the initiative as it is the first of its kind in the province.

Minister Ndabeni-Abrahams closed off the ceremony by urging local communities to lend support to the newly minted Hitachi Construction Machinery as it provides employment to the youth in Polokwane and promotes the entrepreneurial spirit.

