

Input by the Deputy Minister at the Strategic Planning Session held from the 18th -20th August 2022

Minister, Board Chairs and members, DG and officials, guests and the EDSE facilitation team

Let me start with thanking everyone for their robust participation over the past two days. I think we will all agree that it was a very productive two days.

I think our deliberations over the past two days have been closely aligned with the governing party's 54th National Conference, which resolved:

- a) Government measures to support small business and cooperatives need to be scaled up to ensure their impact is felt across the economy. The stimulation and protection of township-based economic activities is also important in this regard.
- b) Youth employment must be prioritized, including through effective public employment programs, internships, job placement, youth set-asides, procurement from youth-owned enterprises and youth entrepreneurship programs. Youth support must be incorporated as one of the areas in the scorecards for firms from which government procures goods and services.
- c) Development finance institutions should give greater emphasis to employment creation, empowerment, industrial diversification and development, small businesses and cooperatives, small-scale agriculture, micro-enterprises and local and regional economic development.
- d) Government must put efforts to ensure that SMME opportunities are created in the whole ICT value chain, and further encourage black industrialists' participation in the country. There must be a



deliberate legislative intervention to promote local content, production, hardware, and further create an enabling environment for innovation in areas of software development, applications development in the black industrialists Programme to ensure SMMEs development.

In doing these things, the ANC reminds us, “the state must actively seek partnerships with the private sector and provide leadership to guide the country towards its developmental goals”.

The session follows close on the heels of the stakeholder dialogue we held in Mbombela. That session looked at the NISED Masterplan and how to get the small enterprise and co-operatives eco-system working better. This planning session brought this discussion home, looking at the role we need to play as the DSBD portfolio to provide thought leadership and leadership across the eco-system.

I really like the warmth and spirit that is growing in the department and the entities. We are behaving like a family. If we don't plan together and share the same understanding of where we need to do things differently, we will not move as a united force to tackle the problems we face. I get the distinct feeling that we are moving in the right direction, and we need to build on this momentum.

But time is not with us. The Minister reminded us to be far more urgent in what we do. The presentation by StatsSA underscored this need for urgency, with the growing number of unemployed and youth not in employment or training. Our country is sitting on a ticking time bomb. The responsibility on our shoulders is huge.

Working with more urgency does not mean we run around like headless chickens. Almost all the group discussions raised the issue of being more focused and more targetted. This means we must be more strategic, and work in a far more integrated manner on those things that will have the biggest impact on small enterprises and co-operatives. This is the logic of

the game-changers, which are also aimed at supplementing our capacity and financial resources by drawing in resources from other role-players in the eco-system. We also need to better understand where we play in different sectors. The engagement on the masterplans was very instructive and we need to develop our own SMME strategy for all the key sectors. The sunrise sectors like Cannabis and Hemp need our urgent attention.

As we do these things, we must improve our research and M&E to know where we have impact. Here we need to be focused in the kind of technical partnerships we enter into with development partners. Making a strong business case is critical to make a case for additional resources from National Treasury.

We now need to take this planning session home by integrating the thinking and plans into the APP of the DSBD and the entities. I think we have created a very good platform for this to happen.

I thank the facilitators, and participants, the Minister for leadership. I would want to end with a song.