



MINISTRY  
SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

## **REMARKS BY MINISTER OF SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, MS STELLA NDABENI-ABRAHAMS, ON THE OCCASION OF HER CHURCH VISIT AT THE METHODIST CHURCH OF SOUTHERN AFRICA, MTHATA**

5 May 2024 (Mthatha)

Programme Director;  
The leadership of the church;  
The people of God;  
Distinguished guests;  
Ladies and gentlemen

I feel privileged and honoured to be speaking you this morning. I stand here before you, confident that the Lord will continue to shower you with His blessings to enable you to prosper and achieve whatever you aspire for.

I am extremely inspired by the Methodist Church, for including in their teachings, a progressive and revolutionary gospel of vuk'uzenzele, a gospel that extols men and women to rise up every morning and seek innovative ways to create a better life for themselves and their fellow citizens here on earth.

Contrary to conventional wisdom there is a strong relationship and bond between the Christian faith and entrepreneurship. As a Minister responsible for promoting and developing small businesses in the country, I am fascinated by the relationship between the teachings of Christ and entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurs often face obstacles. Entrepreneurship requires faith, perseverance, sacrifice, and service – traits that are integral characteristics of a good Christian as well. Indeed, the Church is correct to encourage members of the congregation to start small businesses and to be wealth creators. We know that Jesus was a carpenter and a good *entrepreneur*.

As the Ministry of Small Business Development, we agree with you: South Africa can only thrive and prosper if we prioritise small business development.

Small businesses are the heartbeat of our economy and engine for economic growth and job creation. The National Development Plan seeks to encourage all South Africans to become active citizens. It is expected that by 2030, 90% of the 11 million jobs will be created through small to medium enterprises. If we want to turn around our economic fortunes, we need to redirect our collective energies towards building and growing a small business sector.

It is exciting and encouraging to see that there is a universal appreciation that at the heart of any economic plan must be recognition of the role of small businesses and cooperatives. As a department, we proceed from the premise that financial and non-financial support for small businesses is critical to their growth and sustainability.

The DSBD portfolio has a number of programmes that seek to support SMMEs and Cooperatives throughout the country through financial and non-financial support to ensure that they are sustainable and competitive.

Through our programmes, we work with small businesses and cooperatives to improve the quality of their products, assist local suppliers to expand production capacity (existing and potential); assist suppliers to reduce input cost and to facilitate market access for products (locally and internationally).

We are focusing on providing effective support to small businesses and to ease the regulatory and compliance burden on their part and to expand access to economic opportunities for historically excluded and vulnerable groups. We are doing all these things as part of our commitment to unlock the potential of SMMEs and Co-operatives.

The following are some of the key interventions of the department and its agencies:

- **The Township and Rural Entrepreneurship Programme (TREP)** which supports businesses including bakeries and confectionaries, butcheries, clothing and textile businesses, taxi and auto maintenance and repair, and trade.
- **The Informal and Micro Enterprise Development Programme (IMEDP)** supports informal businesses with start-up operational equipment, with the aim of supporting those who are interested in formalizing and upscaling to fully-fledged formal enterprises.

- **Youth Challenge Fund (YCF)** a financial and non-financial support fund aimed at stimulating innovation amongst youth start-ups to enable them to acquire digital capability in order to participate fully in the digital Industrial Revolution - 4IR and beyond.
- **Incubator programme through Seda**, where we partner with local TVET Colleges to support start-ups.
- **Localisation and market access support** - Developed the localisation policy framework in 2020 where products manufactured, and services rendered by small businesses were introduced to private sector supply chains to access market opportunities.
- **Small Enterprise Manufacturing Support Programme (SEMSP)** aimed at building and supporting SMMEs participating in the manufacturing value chain as part of South Africa's localisation strategy.
- **Shared Economic Infrastructure Facility (SEIF)**- We have redesigned our Shared Economic Infrastructure Facility to focus more on Product Markets, which provide business infrastructure, including renewable energy supply, but also bring in market access, business support and access to finance for beneficiaries. We are currently developing and rolling out 9 product market projects.

- **Township Economy Revitalisation** The objective of project is the formulation of the National Township Revitalisation Policy to addresses the economic challenges and obstacles facing the development of township economies.

Some key legislative and policy interventions are currently underway. The National Small Enterprise Amendment Bill which is currently in Parliament as one of this terms priority legislation. Among other things, the Bill seeks to improve support to small businesses by creating a Small Enterprise Development Finance Agency (SEDFFA) which will consolidate government support for small enterprises, offer financial and non-financial assistance, business advice, investment support, facilitation, and incubator services.

The Bill also proposes the establishment of the Office of the Small Enterprise Ombud Service which will serve as an impartial mediator in disputes, especially for small enterprises, without the need for costly litigation processes. The Small Enterprise Ombud Service will promote accessible and affordable justice for small enterprises.

We are also amending the outdated Businesses Act and have developed a Business Licensing Policy which has just been gazetted for public comment. The policy suggests ways to streamline and strengthen the business licensing system in the country, including tackling the issue of unfair competition by illegal foreign traders. We plan to take the Business Licensing Amendment Bill to Parliament early in the 7th Administration.

The vision of the Department of Small Business Development and its agencies is to create a vibrant culture of entrepreneurship and enterprise growth, where small businesses and co-operatives act as drivers of job creation and inclusive economic growth. Our collective mandate is to ensure the growth of our economy through the promotion and development of sustainable and competitive entrepreneurs, small businesses and co-operatives that contribute to job creation and economic growth.

As a department, we are determined to support township and rural businesses with a series of targeted support interventions aimed at addressing the legacy of spatial exclusion faced by these businesses.

Fellow Christians, it will be important for all entrepreneurs and aspirant entrepreneurs to inform themselves about the programmes and offerings of the department to enable them to seize available opportunities.

As Christians, let us remind our people that it is OK to make money. It is Ok to be rich, as long as your wealth was acquired through legal, legitimate and ethical means through your God-given talents.

I thank you

