



the **PULSE**

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

4IR	Fourth Industrial Revolution
ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution
AFS	Annual Financial Survey
APP	Annual Performance Plan
ASGISA	Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa
B-BBEE	Broad-based Black Economic Empowerment
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa
CIPC	Companies and Intellectual Property Commission
CDS	Co-operatives Development Strategy
CSIR	Council for Scientific and Industrial Research
CDSP	Co-operatives Development Support Programme
CBDA	Co-operatives Bank Development Agency
DFIs	Development Funding Institutions
DDM	District Development Model
DPME	Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
DSBD	Department of Small Business Development
DPSA	Department of Public Service and Administration
DIRCO	Department of International Relations and Cooperation
dtic	The Department of Trade, Industry and Competition
DBE	Department of Basic Education
EDD	Economic Development Department
ESIEID	Economic Sectors, Investment, Employment, and Infrastructure Development
E-governance	Electronic Governance
ERRP	Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan
ESG	Environmental, Social and Governance
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEAR	Growth, Employment and Redistribution
HSSP	Hospitality Sector Support Plan
IBDS	Incubation and Business Development Services
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IFC	International Finance Corporation

Abbreviations and Acronyms

ISPESE	Integrated Strategy for the Promotion of Entrepreneurship and Small Enterprises
MSE	Micro and Small Enterprises
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
MTSF	Medium Term Strategic Framework
NIBUS	National Informal Business Upliftment Strategy
NEDLAC	National Economic Development and Labour Council
NDP	National Development Plan
NISED	National Integrated Small Enterprise Development
NSEA	National Small Enterprise Act
NT	National Treasury
OCSLA	Office of the Chief State Law Adviser
PSC	Public Service Commission
PAYE	Pay As You Earn
PoA	Programme of Action
PFMA	Public Finance Management Act
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
RIA	Regulatory Impact Assessment
SAMAF	South African Micro Finance Apex Fund
SARS	South African Revenue Service
SBC	Small Business Corporation
SBD	Small Business Development
SEDA	Small Enterprise Development Agency
SEFA	Small Enterprise Finance Agency
SEIF	Shared Economic Infrastructure Facility
SEIAS	Socio-Economic Impact Assessment System
SMME	Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises
SOE	State Owned Enterprises
Stats SA	Statistics South Africa
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
TREP	Township and Rural Enterprise Programme
VAT	Value Added Tax
WOE	Women-Owned Enterprises.
WECONA	Women Economic National Assembly



The Department of Small Business Development and its agency, Small Enterprise Development and Finance Agency (SEDFA) exists to champion the growth of small-scale businesses in South Africa.

To access DSBD economic success initiatives, stories and voila welcome to the world of successful entrepreneurship.



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THE MONTH OF *February*

February serves as an important month for entrepreneurship, especially for micro, small-to-medium enterprises (MSMEs), functioning as a strategic juncture that enables business owners to focus into planning and execution, marking a critical reset for business year.



BY: LUBABALO SIGONYELA

Minister Ndabeni

Champions Global Entrepreneurship

Minister Stella Tembisa Ndabeni spearheaded the inaugural provincial consultation on the National Entrepreneurship Strategy at 22 on Sloane in Cape Town, uniting pivotal stakeholders from government, business, academia, and civil society

This initiative, undertaken by the Department of Small Business Development, aims to transform the economic landscape in previously disadvantaged and rural areas of South Africa.

The National Entrepreneurship Strategy seeks to establish a comprehensive and coordinated entrepreneurship ecosystem that fosters entrepreneurial intent, capability, and growth. Its objectives encompass developing entrepreneurs as distinct economic entities, aligning ecosystem stakeholders, enhancing entrepreneurial skills and culture, improving access to financial and non-financial support, and creating a conducive regulatory framework.

The Strategy was developed in response to persistent challenges facing Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises, including low levels of entrepreneurial activity and high enterprise failure rates, particularly in the early stages.

Minister Ndabeni emphasized that the Strategy places the entrepreneur at its centre, recognizing that entrepreneurs progress through different stages of development, each requiring tailored support.

The Minister highlighted that the Strategy is underpinned by a clear Theory of Change, which acknowledges economic uncertainty, inequality, market concentration, infrastructure constraints, and regulatory challenges while identifying opportunities for partnership, innovation, and reform. A National NES Steering Committee, supported by partnerships across government, the private sector, academia, development institutions, and Enterprise Support Organisations, will oversee entrepreneurial outputs and outcomes nationwide.

South Africa's National Development Plan (NDP) 2030 positions MSMEs at the centre of economic growth and job creation. Despite legislative frameworks and policies, including the National Integrated Small Enterprise Development Framework, adequate initiatives to address specific enterprise needs remain lacking.

Continuing...

The Minister noted that the draft NES recognizes the need for an enabling environment that facilitates early-stage entrepreneur growth and proposes mechanisms to strengthen the District Development Model.

The NES will be supported by a digital platform for coordination, ecosystem integration, and interface with entrepreneurs and support organizations, with key performance metrics monitored for accountability and continuous improvement.

Furthermore, the Strategy dictates that entrepreneurs should have necessary skills, aptitudes, information, and financial resources to identify and exploit market opportunities, and it addresses poor digital entrepreneurship by promoting an ecosystem that supports firms in generating new products and services leveraging new technologies and business models.



Africa's future converges with **Global Investment at Mining Indaba**

BY: LUBABALO SIGONYELA



The Small Business Development portfolio continues to expand its focused support for youth-owned enterprises, recognizing their crucial role in driving job creation, business growth, and spatial transformation across the country.

Minister Ndabeni emphasized during her keynote address at the SAYEC Mining Indaba in Cape Town: "Our goal is for mining revenues to translate into tangible benefits in mining-impacted areas through job creation for young people, infrastructure development, skills training, and support for local businesses. Partnerships formed here should yield viable projects, measurable outcomes, and sustained value creation."

The country's progress in digital transformation, beneficiation, industrialization, and ownership transformation remains uneven. Despite developing comprehensive policies, including industrial policy action plans, localization strategies, and transformation frameworks, implementation is hindered by deep-seated structural constraints, including reduced innovation capacity, logistics inefficiencies, skills shortages, limited access to capital, and poor value chain coordination.

However, internationally, countries that have successfully reduced youth unemployment have done so by growing their industries, particularly in sectors such as manufacturing, energy, and technology, which attract large numbers of young people.

Minister Ndabeni said that the government is investing in skills related to energy security, focusing on a: “Just Energy Transition” that shifts from coal dependence to renewable energy, green hydrogen, and modernized infrastructure, and believes young people can play a vital role in industrial transformation, contribute to economic sovereignty, and ensure sustainable national development. Critical mineral beneficiation offers opportunities for young South Africans in the mining sector, enabling them to transition from miners to manufacturers, engineers, scientists, and industrial entrepreneurs.

“Our responsibility is to convert this geological wealth into industrial advantage through beneficiation, deepening supply chains, and creating skilled employment.” the Minister said.

“We recognize that industrial growth without inclusion deepens inequality, which is why we are pursuing inclusive industrial growth through our Reimagined Industrial Strategy, focusing on deepening industrialization, driving transformation, and strengthening public-private partnerships.”

She added: “sustainable youth entrepreneurship requires more than just a limited operating window; building an inclusive economy requires transitioning towards a 24-hour economy that enables businesses to operate across extended hours, unlock new markets, improves asset utilization, and creates more employment opportunities, particularly for young people,” **the Minister said.**



SHE Leads: Women in Business

BY: LUBABALO SIGONYELA

The Minister for Small Business Development, Stella Tembisa Ndabeni, continued her pre-SONA outreach programmes with the Cape Town crusade at 22 on Sloane, in anticipation of the WECONA Western Cape Side Event of The Mining Indaba.

This initiative prioritizes sectors such as manufacturing and agriculture, ensuring women's involvement in pivotal, high-impact economic activities beyond basic auxiliary supply roles. WECONA entails a synergistic collaboration amongst government, private sector, and civil society.

The initiative aims to promote women's economic empowerment, reduce reliance on abusive partners, and combat gender-based violence by fostering economic independence.

The assembly facilitates connections between women-owned businesses and economic opportunities in key sectors. WECONA is dedicated to promoting women's equal participation in the mainstream economy to mitigate Gender-Based Violence and Femicide by fostering economic empowerment and collective action through strategic engagement of public and private sector value chains.

The establishment of the Assembly arose from one of the pillars of the National Strategic Plan on Gender-based Violence and Femicide, which advocates for women's economic empowerment to end Gender-Based Violence and Femicide in South Africa.

Since its launch in October 2021, WECONA has engaged industry leaders to set gender transformation targets, implement existing commitments, and establish game-changing interventions.

WECONA showcases the implementation of commitments towards gender transformation in industry value chains and promotes the realization of the objective that 40 percent of public and private sector procurement be contracted with women-owned businesses.



Continuing...

During the symposium, Minister Ndabeni emphasized the importance of advancing women's participation in the mining economy, from exploration to beneficiation, and ensuring women are owners, producers, and leaders. She highlighted the need for a continental strategy to industrialize Africa's mineral endowments and noted the department's support for small-scale miners and enterprises in the mining value chain.

The Minister expressed the portfolio's ambition to support one million small businesses and enable over 1.8 million jobs through a coordinated ecosystem.

The partnership between the department and WECONA will institutionalize procurement pathways, strengthen gender-responsive financing, expand supplier development, and establish credible monitoring frameworks.





Aluminium solutions guided by female perspective

BY: LUBABALO SIGONYELA

Chicos Holdings is a distinguished manufacturer and installation specialist renowned for crafting high-quality aluminium windows and doors tailored to individual client preferences.

As a prominent expert in aluminium windows and doors, Boitumelo Chicotelane excels in both production and installation services, with skilled team efficiently replacing outdated windows with premium aluminium products, all manufactured in-house.

Chico Holdings received a R250 000 grant under the Asset Assist Programme and benefited from branding support and Access to Markets assistance, which facilitated the CEO's trip to Algeria to engage with key role players and stakeholders, resulting in the establishment of valuable contacts and potential business collaborations.

With a strong foundation as a 100% black-owned and female-led company registered with the CIPC, their mission is to empower the community, particularly focusing on uplifting women. Leveraging over six years of experience, the company has consistently delivered exceptional results to numerous clients, surpassing expectations in beauty and style.

Their team of highly skilled professionals creates bespoke design patterns tailored to client specifications, operating daily to provide prompt service for orders and queries, ensuring tailored satisfaction.

The institution aims to bring dream homes to life by producing precise window and door designs according to client house plans. The company strives to beautify homes and create meritorious developments through meticulous planning.

Guided by established objectives, they prioritize business flourishing and client satisfaction. Adhering to environmental regulations, ensure careful chemical production management and strict protocol adherence, prioritizing quality and exceeding client expectations.

Chico Holdings is committed to exceptional services at reasonable costs, timely delivery, and flexibility through strategic partnerships, dedicated to positively impacting communities, driving growth and excellence.



Reliable gas supply yields outstanding results

BY: LUBABALO SIGONYELA

At Hakem Energies, they firmly believe that access to clean, reliable energy is a fundamental right, not a privilege. This conviction drives them to create a reality where every individual, community, and business has access to sustainable energy solutions. A reality where children can study without relying on candlelight, mothers can cook without risking their health over open flames, and communities can thrive without being left behind.

Hakem comprehensive and holistic approach encompasses strategic energy solutions, aiming to make clean energy affordable, accessible, and aspirational. Founded by Refilwe Sebothoma, Hakem Energies is dedicated to fostering social, economic, and environmental change.

As a movement for energy equity, they strive to bridge the gap between what is and what could be, dismantling energy poverty by providing clean cooking and heating solutions to families, entrepreneurs, and institutions.

They cater to industries such as manufacturing, mining, hospitality, and logistics, ensuring uninterrupted power for essential sectors. Offering end-to-end supply chain solutions, certified technicians, and field teams to support safe usage, storage, and handling of LPG.

The company's mission is to transition corporates toward environmental stewardship and sustainable development, power industries, drive innovation, and build a cleaner, more prosperous future. By replacing paraffin and wood burning with clean-burning LPG, improve air quality, reduce health risks, and promote environmental sustainability. Hakem Energies received a R250 000 grant under the Asset Assist Programme from SEDFA for buying stock.

Their local distributor model creates jobs, upskills individuals, and builds resilient local economies. Safety is at the core of their culture, as they adhere to SANS codes, Department of Energy regulations, and international LPG safety standards.

Hakem Pty Ltd conducts community LPG safety awareness programs, educate communities about LPG safety, and focus on vulnerable groups to address social tragedies.

Through its efforts, they aim to create lasting value for marginalized communities and ensure that no one is left behind.



Premium quality poultry provision

BY: LUBABALO SIGONYELA

Eastern Cape Poultry & Vegetables commenced operations informally in 2017 with vegetable farming, initially focusing on cabbage and spinach cultivation. At the outset, the organization had no land at its disposal, necessitating the use of community gardens that were not being utilized. Starting with two gardens, the number expanded to seven over time. The cooperative supplied notable clients such as Spar Northcrest, Spar Savoy, and Ikwezi.

In 2019, EC Poultry & Vegetables ventured into poultry farming, specializing in raising broiler chicks from one day old to four weeks. Initially, 100 chicks were raised monthly, but demand surged, and the organization now takes in 100 chicks weekly. Through consistent reinvestment of profits, the business acquired a 3.5-hectare smallholding to facilitate operations.

However, the vegetable division faced challenges due to water scarcity, as they relied on rainwater and municipal taps that ceased functioning. Conversely, the broiler chick segment continued to thrive. In 2021, a 1200-cage layer structure was established, and egg

production commenced with 200 layers. A contract with the National Defence Force significantly boosted egg production, which grew to 945 layers producing an average of 780 eggs daily.

Due to high demand, the organization's strategy shifted towards selling to end-users, while also supporting smaller farmers by purchasing eggs to meet demand. This approach facilitated rapid commercialization of the egg production wing.

According to Majeke, the managing director;
"We have set up a 10,000 semi-automated layer structure as our first step towards commercialization. The structure has been built, and we have secured all necessary machinery to support the first phase, which will accommodate 5,000 birds." Production resumed on April 12, 2025, in this new structure. Currently operating at 50% capacity, plans are underway to reach full capacity by adding another 5,000 birds. The estimated total cost for this phase is R1,224,000.00."

Continuing...



Furthermore, groundwork has begun for establishing a medium-sized poultry processing facility, supported by seven 1,500-capacity broiler houses, at an estimated cost of R4,187,000.00.

This initiative aims to capitalize on existing contracts and expand market share. The facility will also cater to other small farmers in the community. EC Poultry & Vegetables Primary Cooperative received R1,5 million grant from Sedfa to assist with their day-to-day operations.

Additionally, plans are in place to revitalize vegetable farming on two hectares of the 3.84-hectare property, with an estimated investment of R784,650.00 for setting up tunnels.

EC Poultry & Vegetables Primary Cooperative aims to be a leading rural-based producer and supplier of poultry products and vegetables in the Eastern Cape, promoting community involvement in agricultural activities and sustainable practices.

The cooperative prioritizes continual professional development, biodiversity conservation, and organic production, while fostering partnerships and knowledge sharing within the industry.

EC Poultry & Vegetables' mission is to provide unmatched service, empower households through agricultural practices, and contribute to poverty alleviation and youth unemployment eradication.





What South Africans can look forward to in 2026

BY: TAMRY ESIRI

As 2026 unfolds, South Africa enters a year marked by important milestones, cautious economic optimism, and renewed opportunities for civic participation. While the national context remains complex, several developments point to a year in which progress will be shaped not only by policy and markets, but by the active involvement of citizens, communities, and institutions.

Local Government Elections and Civic Engagement

One of the most significant moments of 2026 will be South Africa's local government elections. As noted by David Ansara of The Common Sense, these elections provide citizens with a direct opportunity to influence leadership and service delivery at the municipal level, the sphere of government closest to everyday community life.

Beyond the ballot box, an election year places renewed emphasis on accountability, responsiveness, and public participation.

Gradual Economic Momentum

Economic indicators suggest that South Africa's growth momentum is expected to strengthen in 2026. According to Standard Bank, forecasts point to a modest acceleration in economic expansion, supported by improved electricity availability and enhanced logistics infrastructure. These developments are enabling businesses to operate with greater certainty, supporting investment, planning, and production growth.

A more stable currency environment has further contributed to easing inflationary pressures, lowering the cost of imported goods and offering some relief to consumers. While global economic conditions remain fluid, steady growth among key trading partners continues to support demand for South African exports.

Global Partnerships and the Green Transition

South Africa's role within the global economy continues to evolve, particularly in relation to climate policy and clean energy. As highlighted in *Africa: Trends to Watch in 2026*, published by Investing in African Mining Indaba, new international environmental regulations present both challenges and opportunities for the country.

In response, strategic partnerships with global counterparts are unlocking investment in clean energy, critical minerals, and future-focused industries such as green hydrogen and battery production. These initiatives support skills development, technology transfer, and long-term industrial sustainability.

Reforming the Global Financial System

South Africa's leadership role in international forums during 2025 is also drawing attention to broader issues affecting the African continent, including access to affordable finance and sovereign debt sustainability. Africa: Trends to Watch in 2026 notes that ongoing discussions around reforming global financial structures aim to reduce borrowing costs, improve credit assessments, and strengthen transparency.

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A Strong Year for Sport and National Pride

Beyond policy and economics, 2026 promises moments of shared excitement and national pride through sport. As highlighted by Karabo Peter of GoodThingsGuy, South Africa's sporting calendar will feature major international events across cycling, golf, combat sports, and rugby.

These events not only showcase local talent and world-class competition but also contribute to tourism, job creation, and social cohesion. Sport continues to serve as a powerful unifying force, bringing South Africans together across backgrounds in moments of collective celebration.

Looking Ahead

Taken together, 2026 emerges as a year defined by participation in democracy, economic recovery, global cooperation, and shared cultural experiences. While challenges remain, the year ahead offers meaningful opportunities to engage constructively, contribute purposefully, and build momentum toward inclusive growth and development.

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BY: MOSHALA JANE KOLANYANE

February: A Month That Teaches Us About Love

February is often recognised as the month of love. Shops are filled with red and pink displays, hearts are everywhere and Valentine's Day takes centre stage. While romantic love is celebrated loudly during this time, February is about so much more than flowers, chocolates and grand gestures. At its core, February invites us to reflect on love in its truest and broadest form, love that shows up in our everyday lives often quietly and without recognition.

Love is not only found in romantic relationships. It lives in friendships that have stood the test of time, in families who support one another through difficult seasons and in colleagues who show patience, understanding and teamwork. It is present in the small moments like a kind word when someone is struggling, a listening ear, or a simple act of consideration. These expressions of love may not come wrapped in ribbons, but they carry just as much meaning.

February reminds us that love begins with connection. In a world that often feels rushed and demanding, taking time to truly connect with others is an act of care. Checking on someone, asking how they are really doing or offering help without being asked are simple

yet powerful ways to express love. These moments strengthen our relationships and create environments where people feel valued and seen.

This month also encourages us to reflect on self-love, a form of love that is often overlooked. Loving oneself is not about selfishness but about recognising our worth and taking responsibility for our wellbeing. It means setting healthy boundaries, allowing ourselves rest, and being gentle with ourselves when things do not go as planned. February serves as a reminder that we cannot pour from an empty cup because caring for ourselves allows us to show up better for others.

Love is also demonstrated through empathy and compassion. Everyone carries unseen struggles and February invites us to approach one another with kindness rather than judgement. A little patience, understanding and grace can make a significant difference in someone's day. When we choose empathy, we contribute to a culture of respect and emotional safety which is something that benefits us all.

Continuing...

In our communities and workplaces, love shows itself through collaboration and mutual support. It is reflected in teamwork, respect for different perspectives, and a willingness to uplift one another. When people feel supported and appreciated, morale improves and relationships grow stronger. February gives us the opportunity to intentionally foster these values and strengthen the bonds that connect us.

Importantly, love is not only about how we feel, but about what we do. It is an action, a choice we make daily. Love is shown when we choose kindness over impatience, understanding over assumptions, and encouragement over criticism. These choices may seem small, but collectively they shape the environments we live and work in.

As we move through February, let us remember that love does not have to be loud or dramatic to be meaningful. Sometimes, love is simply being present. It is consistency, reliability, and care. It is choosing to treat others with dignity and respect, even when it is not convenient.

In embracing February as a month of love, we are reminded that love is not limited to a single day or a single relationship. It is something we can practice every day in many forms, through our words, actions, and attitudes. When we do so, we create stronger connections, healthier communities, and a more compassionate world, not only in February, but throughout the year.



Why most goals fade and how to keep them on track: A practical guide to making meaningful progress throughout the year

As the year moves beyond its opening months, many of the goals set with confidence at the start of the year have already been abandoned. As routines resume and priorities compete for attention, motivation often gives way to pressure and fatigue. This is not a reflection of poor discipline, but of goals that were not designed for sustainability. Lasting progress depends less on how ambitious goals are, and more on how realistically they are supported over time.

Below are practical approaches to keeping goals relevant, achievable, and active well beyond January:

1. Shift from Ambition to Sustainability

While ambitious goals can be motivating, they are often difficult to maintain if they are not grounded in reality. Sustainable goals are those that fit into existing routines and capacity. Instead of asking what would be ideal to achieve, it is more effective to ask what can be consistently worked on, even during demanding periods.

2. Break Goals into Clear, Manageable Steps

Large goals can feel overwhelming when viewed in their entirety. Breaking them down into smaller, defined actions makes them easier to approach and track. These steps should be specific, time-bound, and measurable, allowing progress to be recognised incrementally.

3. Schedule Regular Check-Ins

Goals require ongoing attention to remain relevant. Setting aside time for regular reflection, whether monthly or quarterly, allows for reassessment and adjustment. These check-ins provide an opportunity to evaluate what is working, identify obstacles, and realign goals with current circumstances.

4. Redefine Motivation

Motivation is often treated as a prerequisite for action, yet it is more reliably sustained through

momentum. Taking small steps, even when motivation is low, helps to build confidence and consistency over time. Rather than waiting to feel inspired, committing to action keeps goals active and progress ongoing.

5. Measure Progress, Not Perfection

Progress is rarely linear. There will be periods of momentum and periods of pause. Measuring progress by consistency rather than perfection encourages persistence and reduces the likelihood of disengagement.

Meaningful progress is built through consistency, not intensity. When goals are treated as ongoing commitments rather than January intentions, they become part of everyday life. With clarity, flexibility, and steady effort, real progress remains possible long after the start of the year.



Happy Birthday



02

- Monakali Fezeka

04

- Nogaya Zizipho

05

- Sigonyela Lubabalo

06

- Monyeki Kerileng
- Talana Percival

08

- Mabokwana Tebogo
- Sibande Monica

10

- Netshivhambe Mpho

11

- Radebe Matthews

12

- Buthelezi Nobuhle
- Motsieloa Thabo

14

- Kidsingh Hansraj

17

- Tladi Violet

20

- Mavundla Silondiwe

21

- Sekee Motshidisi
- Phundulu Sharron

22

- Mxabo Xolisa

23

- Netsianda Vhutshilo

27

- Matjeke Khanimambo

28

- Holomisa-Mtirara
Buyiselwa

29

- Kgosi Morongwa

30

- Mafaralala Regina
Teballo

31

- Njadu Thulisa



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