



## Media Statement

### **MEC MOHALE HITS THE GROUND RUNNING TO REVITALIZE RURAL AND TOWNSHIP ECONOMIES**

**21 October 2022**

Subsequent to the commitment made by the Free State MEC for Economic, Small Business Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs (DESTEA), Mr. Makalo Mohale when tabling the Departmental Budget Vote at the legislature to revitalize the rural and the township economy of the Province; he geared on an interactive discussion with township business owners and unemployed graduates of Dihlabeng Local Municipality on 11 October 2022 thereafter escalated his initiative together with the Premier Sefora Ntombela to meet the said target audience from nearby towns around Maluti a Phofung Local municipality where about 5000 SMMEs involving Automotive (panel beating, motor mechanics and electricians), Burial societies, Stokvels, Plumbers, toilet paper manufactures Bakeries, Recycling, tuck-shops owners, fashion designers, Car wash business owners, Agro-processors, Saloons, logistics, manufacturing, etc including unemployed graduates gathered under one roof on 17 October in Harrismith and 18 October 2022 in Makeneng, Qwaqwa to tackle daunting challenges besetting township enterprises.

MEC Mohale has encouraged SMMEs to unite and work together instead of opening businesses selling the same products or services in one area but rather consider new viable businesses which will serve as an economic value chain amongst themselves, for example: when there is a car wash in one street then the other business can sell products needed for the car wash to efficiently operate so that car wash owners buy products from nearby SMME.

He explained that many township businesses collapsed due to the Covid-19 pandemic, poor marketing strategies, and lack of business and financial management skills hence the importance of intertwining the said working session with entities such as Free State Gambling Liquor and Tourism Authority (FSGLTA) inclusive of Free State Development Cooperation (FDC), National Youth Development Agency (NYDA), Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA) and South African Revenue Services (SARS) in order where possible to respond immediately challenges that businesses are faced with; because such SMMEs have the capacity to employ and bridge the gap of unemployment, therefore, the department will continue working with municipalities to come up with policies to ensure that township businesses are supported with necessary skills hence the immediate solution was that unemployed graduates will be placed in different township businesses to offer their expertise such as bookkeeping, marketing, financial management, etc. for the same businesses to grow and not be run with common sense, and will be paid a stipend for two to three years by the Department. Equally, they will gain experience and at the same time assist township businesses with much-needed skills to remain sustainable.



“Though as DESTEA, we operate within limited resources, mainly budget and priorities but through effective and efficient implementation of the Local Economic Development and Transformation Bill the vision to construct sustainable and viable businesses which will contribute to the economy of our Province is key on the list because these working sessions bounce constructive ideas addressing the real issues so that when mapping approaches to engage and encourage economic mainstream drivers and attracting investors including tourists we have already provided technical skills and knowledge to our township business owners. We have also bestowed many enterprises with an opportunity to expose and showcase their products and services to potential buyers and investors at the national and international level,” said MEC Mohale.

The abovementioned local municipalities are one of the disadvantaged areas within Thabo Mofutsanyana district; where most of the households survive with the Government’s assistance of social grants hence MEC Mohale finds it crucial to create a platform to assess the state of affairs on the ground and provide necessary interventions including the assistance to access the markets.

On the same occasion in Makeneng village, the Buddies for Life Agency was showered with the requested printer amounting to **R78 000** and that was after the presentation that if that printer can be procured, they can employ more young people to the business. Thereafter Ntombela Ditjhaba from Kopano ke Matla Security (community members from the village grouped themselves to maintain safety services around their communities) was given 15 torches and reflectors.

Due to her passion for farming, Ms. Mosele Mokoena who hails from Semphurwaneng village has plans to plant vegetables for processing and bottling at the beginning of the planting season. This initiative will lead to the opportunity of employing more other people; she requested and assisted with two big JOJO tanks, nets, and fencing as she operates within the Agricultural sector.

“It takes a brave, courageous and bold woman, willing to work hard and make the most of what they have in hand. Farming needs one to be valiant enough and rise to the challenges. “I am excited because today after so many years I stand tall and come to witness what the government of the day has been promising to the people that government people should be patient. I can proudly confirm those good things come to those who wait; based on the fact that I hailed from a very downtrodden and disadvantaged family—I was under the impression that only middle-class people are considered but today God has answered my prayers through NTATE MOHALE’s initiative of improving the lives and the economy in rural areas,” said Mokoena.

She continued that Moketa ho tsoswa o itekang, mmuso o tla nthola pele se ntse ke matha, ke iteka—ha nkaba ka phutha matsoho ka re ke emela mmuso empa ke ile ka ema ka tlama tjale thekeng ka ya pele. Ke thusitswe hodima seo ke neng ke se ke se haile jwale ke kgothaletsa batho bohle haholo ba kgwebong ho qala ha nyenyane mme ha thuso e tla e thole oso o behile mokolokotwane. Mamello e tswala katleho mme re



**destea**

department of  
Economic, Small Business Development,  
Tourism and Environmental Affairs  
FREE STATE PROVINCE

keke ra thuswa nako e le ngwee empa re lokela ho iteka hore ntshetsa maphelo a rona pele.

In Maluti a Phofung Local Municipality, DESTEA assisted 49 tuck-shops, 12 enterprises supported with business plan development, financial management skills, Company Tax support services, Marketing, and Legal services, and three industrializations. Informal Micro Enterprises Development Programme supported 83 enterprises; SEFA about 32 SMMEs; SETA about nine.

In his conclusion, MEC Mohale stated that the department will continue to remain critical in a noble quest to deliver quality services in reviving the economy of rural and township areas, not only to specific people but to the entire Province. We will never end to act with speed and urgency where possible to accelerate commitments made.

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