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Transnet Launches its Fifth Small Business Hub in Empangeni

Transnet today officially launched an Enterprise Development mega-hub for small businesses and entrepreneurs in Empangeni, north of KwaZulu-Natal.

The business mega-hub, the first of its kind for Empangeni will assist small businesses, aspirant entrepreneurs and start-ups to be incubated into a real business environment. The Empangeni mega-hub is part of Transnet's Enterprise Development programme and it is set-up as a "walk-in centre" for small businesses in need of the following assistance:

- Company Registration
- Business Skills Development
- Temporary Office Space and mentorship
- Tax Registration and Administration
- Project Implementation and monitoring plans
- Supplier Readiness Programme
- Participating in the public procurement system.

The hub was launched by the Minister of Public Enterprises, Mr. Pravin Gordhan and the Transnet Chairman, Dr Popo Molefe, in the presence of His Majesty King Goodwill Zwelithini, and Provincial government representatives. It is the fifth of its kind that Transnet has established in the country to promote small business development. Similar hubs are operational in Johannesburg (Gauteng), Mdatsane (Eastern Cape), De Aar (Northern Cape) and in Saldanha (Western Cape).

To get the small businesses ready, Transnet has formed partnerships with entities such as South African Revenue Service (SARS), the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA), the Small Enterprise Financial Agency (SEFA) and the Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA) that will provide accredited training programmes, registrations and capacity building to new and existing businesses.

The business centre is designed to function as a multipurpose hub that will be managed by Transnet while its strategic partners provide human capital resources, financial and non-financial support.

The programme has already assisted 16 small medium and micro-sized enterprises (SMMEs) business who were actively involved in the construction of the hub launched today. The 16 SMMEs are part of the incubation programme specializing in construction.

This initiative is also part of Transnet's strategic plans to create enterprise development programmes that will expand opportunities communities where the company operates. These initiatives target businesses owned by black people, youth, women and people living with disabilities.

Speaking at the launch Minister Pravin Gordhan said: "Despite many problems in its recent history, Transnet is able to come to communities like the ones here, in order to give our young people hope; it gives them opportunities, it gives them training. Imagine if we could multiply this hub in a thousand different places in South Africa. Then our young people will not be frustrated, they will not be asking where is my career going to start?"

Minister Godhan further added "This hub is about generating growth from below. It is about training people, giving them opportunities, giving them the kind of guidance they require so they can have the energy and enterprise that can drive our economy".

Transnet Acting Group Chief Executive, Mr Tau Morwe said: "Through this establishment we are looking to build sustainable relationships with the community of Empangeni. This initiative is part of Transnet's plans to plough back into areas where our company operates by availing resources that will shape the future of our youth, women and disabled counterparts".

The AGCE also called communities to assist in protecting the railway infrastructure: "We are also looking to use this opportunity to educate the community of Empangeni about the role of Transnet in our economy and how they can assist us to protect our railway infrastructure, reduce fatalities on our lines and in turn prevent unnecessary derailments. The reality is that the more trains we run in this area, the more job opportunities we create for the people of this region. So we urge you to assist protect the assets of Transnet in the form of trains, railway lines, property and its people."

For more information on Transnet Enterprise Development Hubs visit www.transnet.net.

Issued on behalf of Transnet SOC Ltd

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About Transnet

Transnet is wholly owned by the Government of the Republic of South Africa. The Company is uniquely positioned to provide integrated, seamless transport solutions for its customers in the bulk and manufacturing sectors. This is part of its drive to improve the efficiency and competitiveness of the South African economy.

Transnet has five operating divisions:

Transnet Freight Rail transports bulk, break-bulk and containerised freight along 30 400 kilometres of rail track.

Transnet Engineering manufactures and maintains rolling stock. It consists of eight product-focused business units which provide services ranging from rolling stock refurbishment, conversion and upgrades, to the manufacturing of locomotives, coaches and wagons.

Transnet National Ports Authority is responsible for the safe, efficient and effective functioning of the national ports system, which it manages in a landlord capacity. The National Ports Authority is also a provider of port infrastructure and marine services at all commercial ports in South Africa.

Transnet Port Terminals owns and operates 16 cargo terminal operations situated at seven South African ports. It provides cargo-handling services for the container, bulk, automotive and break-bulk sectors.

Transnet Pipelines transports a range of petroleum products and gas through 3 800 kilometres of underground pipelines, which traverse five provinces, thereby ensuring the security of supply of petroleum products to the inland market, especially Gauteng.

Specialist units:

Transnet Group Capital manages the Company's largest capital projects.

Transnet Property manages the Company's property portfolio.