

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

2021 Virtual Gauteng SMME Summit to boost SMMEs during COVID-19

Johannesburg, 22 February 2021: The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on revenues in many Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs), resulting in severe strain on their business operations. Experiencing the great uncertainty regarding the sustainability of their businesses during the last few months, the Gauteng Department of Economic Development in collaboration with its partners—Vodacom, Microsoft, PPC, Cash Build, Coca Cola, Accenture, Digify Africa and Heavy Chef— aim to assist SMMEs in directing their businesses and finding sustainable solutions as they strive to recover from the impact the pandemic has had on their operations.

“More than half of the owners of SMMEs have expressed great uncertainty regarding the viability of their businesses during the last few months due to the COVID-19 pandemic. That is why as the department, we made the decision to provide knowledge, skills and resources to enable small businesses to continue their operations. We are committed to supporting, nurturing and helping SMMEs to foster innovative ways to deal with the impact of the pandemic,” says Tseliso Mohlomi, Director: Special Projects, Strategic Partnerships and International Relations at the Gauteng Department of Economic Development.

Tackling the issue of inclusive economic transformation and strengthening the sustainability of township businesses, the department will be hosting the virtual Gauteng SMME Summit 2021 on the 25th and 26th of February 2021. The summit, in its second year, aims to help create access to information, financial assistance and ultimately access to markets for the township-based enterprises. In line with the Gauteng Township Economy Revitalisation Strategy, the government will continue to support the development of township enterprises and create inclusive economic growth.

“Through this summit, the department seeks to tackle the issues of inclusive economic transformation and strengthen the importance of collaboration and cooperation amongst small businesses. Our objectives are to achieve tangible outcomes and to be able to monitor and track achievements. The public and private sectors have taken significant interventions to support small businesses and their employees,” says Mohlomi.

The purpose of this year’s summit is to ensure that the SMMEs overcome the financial burden that has been caused by this pandemic, creating a platform where they can collaborate with one another, providing strategies and opportunities in combating the existing challenge, providing the platform for coordination, partnership, collaboration as well as making sure they are co-creating the capabilities. This year’s summit will be hosted virtually to adhere to best practice in social distancing measures and will be live streamed on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

“Governments must take an interest in the problems that SMMEs face. If they are aware of how difficult it is for SMMEs to carry out certain business tasks and if they understand which sectors are worth investing in, they can effectively help spur economic growth. The pandemic has given us the opportunity to offer the support to the township SMMEs who somehow have been overtaken by the events within the economic mainstream. Our vision to invest in both financially and non-financial support like skills development, capacity building, grant funding as well as the access to market,” continues Mohlomi.

Further to government intervention, there is collaboration between private and public sector partners to develop tailored initiatives that will aid the SMMEs to access opportunities and information.

“As a purpose-led organisation focused on connecting for a better future by enabling a digital society, we are excited to participate in this summit and to be part of a solution that supports SMMEs, which are a vital part of our economy. The pandemic underscores the possibilities of digital technologies in assisting SMMEs to not only survive, but to also thrive. It is for this reason that our digital solutions are specifically tailored to this sector of business to drive growth. If implemented correctly, digital solutions and services also provide significant opportunities to drive growth and innovation while keeping costs low,” says William Mzimba, Chief Executive Officer for Vodacom Business Group.

ENDS.

For media enquiries, please contact:

Sabelo Ndlangisa

Director, Corporate Communication and Media Liaison Communication, Gauteng

Department of Economic Development.

Cell: 066 4860 444

Email: sabelo.ndlangisa@gauteng.gov.za

Follow us on Twitter: @GautengDED

Like our Facebook page: Gauteng Department of Economic Development

Issued by the Gauteng Department of Economic Development: www.gauteng.gov.za