

Monday, 21 August 2017

TPT completes R2 million programme to youth owned rural co-operatives

Saturday 19 July 2017, marked the completion of a major SMME Development programme which had seen nine youth owned rural co-operatives in KwaZulu-Natal receive barbed-wire and tissue manufacturing machines since the start of the programme in 2013. A number of high profile dignitaries were present for the official ceremony including the KZN MEC, Sihle Zikalala, Mayor of Umvoti Local Municipality, Cllr Thami Ngubane, and Transnet Port Terminals' Chief Executive (CE), Nozipho Sithole. The event included a site visit to a youth owned co-operative's workshop in Greytown, called Amakhabela cc, who had received a toilet paper manufacturing machine as part of the programme. To date Amakhabela cc are the most successful of the co-operatives involved in this project having secured a substantial contract with Spar to supply 40 Spar branches in KZN with their in-house branded toilet paper called Twin Twice produced by the co-operative.

"This event marks the completion of a SMME Development programme by TPT that was run in conjunction with Economic Development Tourism & Environmental Affairs (EDTEA) and the Coastal TVET College in Hammarsdale. It has provided a boost of more than R2 million to youth owned rural co-operatives in KwaZulu-Natal through the supply of barbed-wire and toilet paper manufacturing machines. It is so rewarding to see co-operatives thrive when given the right type of financial and business support to succeed," stated Thandi Sabelo, TPT Executive Manager for Procurement.

Since the launch of the programme in 2013, 9 co-operatives were identified and to ensure sustainability and growth, TPT in partnership with EDTEA entered into an agreement to procure manufacturing equipment for the cooperatives by contributing 50/50 towards procuring the equipment. The 9 cooperatives were not only trained in the manufacturing sector but in business management skills as well to equip them to manage their businesses once the machines had been delivered.

"As a state-owned company the empowerment of South Africa's historically disadvantaged people is high on government's agenda and TPT is committed to implementing this agenda. Transnet fully supports the enhanced



participation of black-owned Exempted Micro-Enterprises (EME) and Qualifying Small Enterprises (QSE) in the mainstream economy, as an effective way to redress the economic imbalances of the past. For this reason, it's been vital that we provide meaningful support to these entities so they can be operationally and financially independent. We will continue to track their progress and success, while encouraging and supporting them to also give back to their communities - particularly when there are opportunities for job creation and stimulating further growth of the economy. We are grateful that we have been able to partner with the provincial government. We pledge our support to continue to partner as far as we are actually developing the economy, we are developing the youth, we are developing the women and we are developing our future as South Africa," stated TPT's CE, Nozipho Sithole.

Already there have been instances of how the previous handovers of equipment by TPT benefitted not only the lives of the youth who own these co-operatives in the programme, but the communities where they live as well. One such example was witnessed recently when TPT through a partnership with another co-operative from the programme, Sibambisane CC, helped to revamp Buhlebuzile Primary School in the Pongola area and provided the disadvantaged learners with new school shoes and uniforms.

In his address, the KZN MEC, Sihle Zikalala, said that the success of the co-operatives like Amakhabelo cc demonstrated that if government and the private sector continue to work together, they will contribute more to the lives of SA's people. "It is undeniable that owing to the country's employment figures, the unemployment rate is at a worrying level. It stands at 27%. We all have to work together to ensure that we address the hopelessness among the youth and therefore position them and place them to participate in building the future of our country. We'd like to urge and encourage our young people to adopt a more favourable outlook toward entrepreneurship and co-operatives. The fact is that SMME's and co-operatives have a great role to play in the economy of our country. Once again, I'd like to thank Transnet for so willingly stepping up and joining hands with us in an initiative that we are sure will go a considerable mile towards serving as a catalyst for local entrepreneurship and the empowerment of our young people," Zikalala explained.



Other co-operatives who have received machinery to manufacture either barbed-wire or toilet paper are Woman's Vision Co-Op, Lufuno Holdings and Indluzela based in Hammarsdale. Zikhuthaze and Khazimulise manufacture in Pietermaritzburg. Amakhabela is in Greytown and Kwa Dyna's is based in Ulundi. Imbiza operates from Eshowe and the most recent recipient of a machine is Sibambisane cc in Pongola.

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Notes to editor:

Transnet Port Terminals manages 16 cargo terminal facilities across seven South African ports with a staff compliment of over 9 000. Its operations target four major market sectors, namely the automotive sector, containers, bulk and break bulk, organised according to their respective geographical regions.

Nozipho Sithole is the Chief Executive.

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