

**Regional Business Networking Session between South African and Mauritian  
MSMEs on Wednesday 19 October 2022 at 10:00 hrs at SME Mauritius**

**Her Excellency Dr Manzini**

**High Commissioner of the Republic of South Africa in Mauritius**

**Mr Ambrose Makgwale**

**Leader of SEDA Delegation**

**Mr Ravin Rampersad, CEO of SME Mauritius**

**Entrepreneurs from South Africa**

**Entrepreneurs from Mauritius**

**Members of the Press**

**Distinguished Guest**

**Ladies and gentleman**

**All protocol observed**

Very good morning to you all

It is an honour to be invited to this first SME specific Regional Business Networking session today at SME Mauritius. It is indeed encouraging to be part of the first forum exclusively dedicated to MSMEs. I sincerely hope we will have further opportunities such as this one to keep enhancing market opportunities for MSMEs.

I must straight away recognise your courage and ingenuity at being Entrepreneurs and adhere to the fact that worldwide MSMEs contribute massively to economic development. The world has for two years now been under pressure of all sorts, but these extreme conditions has not dampened the spirit of Entrepreneurs. They have been on all fronts putting their creative efforts at the service of mankind. The interventions of

Entrepreneurs have been manifold, be it to feed nations or simply to preserve community health.

Startups have been mushrooming in response to COVID-19, with products such as facemasks and vaccines or even new and safer modes of food delivery. No one can contest the important role MSMEs play in our socio-economic development.

In this context, It makes me very proud not only to see our you all Entrepreneurs working together for a common goal but also to see MSMEs from the south starting to look in the same direction, now that they know they have converging objectives.

Entrepreneurs, it is clear to one and all that this extremely competitive worldwide environment is making things difficult. However, I am comforted when I see support institutions such as SEDA and SME Mauritius playing key roles to support and help you go through these challenges. I am confident that you will find better business growth in the short to medium term. And I am in no doubt that South African and Mauritian MSMEs can work together to make a better future for themselves, their respective communities and their country.

I will always say that we should all consider it a sacred duty to contribute our share to enhance the economic and social advancement of this part of the world.

In Mauritius, I can see clear signs that our economy taking off and with the continued effort of support institution such as SME Mauritius, MSMEs are being included in the mainstream of economic development of our country. From what I have witnessed so far, I am confident that following this session, there will be enhanced inclusiveness.

I wish to commend this regional Business Networking session for another special reason: It sows the seed of one-to-one business collaboration and co-operation, and further cements the relationship between Mauritius and South Africa, a privileged partner for long and an economic power house, only five hours away from Mauritius.

In my humble opinion, a two-way business flow will go a long way and lead to a win-win situation for both countries.

This workshop should be set as an example of regional cooperation and needs to be replicated with other partner countries within the SADC, COMESA and other trade associations in the Indian Ocean regions.

Alone we can go fast; but together we can go far. This applies even in business.

Let me seize this opportunity to acknowledge the remarkable work of the High Commissioner of South Africa in Mauritius, Dr Manzini, and her colleagues.

I also commend the CEO of SME Mauritius, Ravin Rampersad and his team for making this event a reality.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we are today a step ahead in our bilateral collaboration. Let us strengthen it further.

I strongly believe that the Africa Free Trade Agreement will come as a further boost to inter-regional trade.

Being a strong advocate of inclusivity in business, I encourage you all to work together to make a genuine change in the life of our citizens.

As I now need to leave you all to networking for business opportunities, I will stop here. I wish you all a great networking session and hope soon to enjoy the fruits of what I humbly consider a unique opportunity granted to us to succeed in cooperation.

Thank you for your kind attention