

Government unlocks potential for township economy

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Minister in the Presidency responsible for Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, Jeff Radebe, has launched EZASE-KASI Business Fridays, a massive campaign aimed at supporting township economies.



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Speaking at the programme's launch in Cape Town on Friday, 26 August, the minister said the new programme, which is the brainchild of local entrepreneur Siyanda Mtulu, is an initiative aimed at steering the city's economic activity towards townships every Friday.

"It's a fantastic idea, what [Mtulu] has done ... When we talk about Vision 2030, it does not depend only on government and the private sector. Each and every South African has a role to play, so this initiative shows the imagination and creativity in the entrepreneurship of all South Africans.

"What I like about this initiative is that it brings big business and links it to our business people in our townships so that it can be able to boost those economies. I'm looking forward to see this initiative every Friday, not only here in Cape Town but throughout the Republic of South Africa," the Minister said.

The Minister said EZASE-KASI Business Fridays will be co-branded with the recently launched National Development Plan (NDP) Brand Identity to mobilise and actively engage citizens on the NDP and township economies.

Tourism Deputy Minister Tokozile Xasa, who also attended the launch, said this was one of the best initiatives to bolster economic growth in townships.

She said the initiative is in line with the department's White Paper on Tourism, or the Development and Promotion of Tourism in South Africa White Paper, which also looks at the potential of township economies, among other things.

She said there is also potential for infrastructure development, skills development and nurturing the kind of support that is required to help township businesses flourish.

"There are lot of ... indigenous skills around crafting. There's everything that tourists are looking for when they come to South Africa," she said.

The programme is expected to be expanded across the country to support township businesses.

Mtulu said entrepreneurship in South Africa has a very low ranking compared to other economies. He said EZASE-KASI Business Fridays is aimed at promoting market access.

He also urged South Africans to wear items produced by townships, eat lunch in the townships as well as participate in corporate township tours and buy goods from township businesses.

This would benefit ordinary South Africans by creating jobs and it is also a chance for big companies to support and do business with Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) companies, he said.

The initiative is backed by insurance firm SANTAM.

SANTAM's John Lomberg said the firm would train people, targeting 600 to 800 entrepreneurs across the country.

After the launch, Minister Radebe and other stakeholders visited Mzoli's Butcher and Grill, a very popular braai spot in Gugulethu as part of engaging the locals on the initiative.

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