

MANUFACTURING INDABA KZN highlights the province's achievements and common goals between government and industry

DURBAN – The Manufacturing Indaba Kwazulu- Natal was buzzing with delegates and manufacturers who came to the Durban ICC to attend the second annual manufacturing symposium and business showcase last week.

The theme for the 2016 conference, '*manufacturing the future*', was debated and discussed both in a South African and provincial context. KwaZulu-Natal's manufacturing sector is the second largest in the country and is poised for foreign investment and particularly for re-export opportunities through the port of Durban.

With a fully packed auditorium and over 100 delegates present, the importance of collaboration between government and industry was emphasised by many panellists from various manufacturing interest groups.

The conference enjoyed high profile attendance from both government and the private sector with the MEC for Economic Development, Tourism & Environmental Affairs, Mr Sihle Zikalala; Chief Director for African Industrial Development with the Department of Trade & Industry (dti), Nigel Gwynne-Evans and Managing Director of Jonker Sailplanes, Uys Jonker, all delivering keynote addresses. CEOs and big manufacturing corporations as well as small manufacturing companies were represented.

Highlights of the 2016 KZN Indaba include:

- Over 100 delegates attended
- 20 media houses present
- Media coverage in major national and provincial news publications
- Partnerships with the NCPC-SA, Durban Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Trade & Investment KwaZulu-Natal, and Economic Development and Growth (EDGE) in Ethekewini
- 10 companies showcased at exhibition stands

MEC Sihle Zikalala highlighted the importance of Durban as a port for exporting South African products to Africa and abroad. He said, “We have two special economic zones – the Dube Trade Port and the Richards Bay IDZ - to support those involved in manufacturing in the province. These include rental rates, infrastructure support, subsidies, serviced industrial land and funding support. This is on top of the incentives offered by **the dti**.”

“As government, we are playing our part to support the manufacturing sector. We appeal to the private sector to come on board. We invite you to leverage these opportunities during times of economic hardship. We are doing everything to remove potential hurdles. Our Department and other public entities are more than ready to work with those interested in expanding their businesses. We hope we won’t be talking for the sake of talking, but be able to realise whatever we have defined and agreed upon at the conference.”

Uys Jonker, the Managing Director of the world-class Jonker Sailplanes which have won worldwide acclaim in international aviation circles, spoke about the importance of the softer issues that build successful manufacturing operations. “Never forget the power of passion. The design work is preceded by passion and inspiration. You have to have passion, focus and determination, or else there will be no gold medals. Without passion there’s no drive behind it. Money can’t create something. Passion creates something, with money as the vehicle,” said Uys.

Nigel Gwynne-Evans, Chief Director for African Industrial Development highlighted the current work and incentives of **the dti**. “We need to grow the productive sectors of the manufacturing sectors, support the diversification of the economy, break the domestic economy’s dependence on imports and follow a less-intensive carbon growth path,” said Gwynne-Evans.

He further encouraged Kwazulu-Natal manufacturers to work together. “At a provincial level, it’s critical to work in associations, in clusters. It’s fundamental that you work as groups, if not, government gets bombarded by all the requests. The more organized you are, the better for everyone.”

Despite tough economic times and global volatility and the slump in demand for commodities, there were good news stories that were shared.



“As **the dti**, in 2016 we have launched R7billion in new investments. There are a lot of positive investments. None of these are quick fixes, but it will take a sustained collaborative effort over a long period of time,” said Gwynne-Evans.

PRESS RELEASE ENDS

MORE ABOUT THE MANUFACTURING INDABA

South Africa’s economy is under pressure on several fronts and business confidence is at a low. The nation’s manufacturing industries continues to face tremendous challenges; increasing production and wage costs, a shrinking manufacturing base, supply chain challenges, and the threat of other emerging economies which continue to threaten the growth of South African manufacturers. The success of the nation depends on a strong and innovative manufacturing base and we must continue to work together to promote prosperity through manufacturing, science and innovation.

The aim of the Manufacturing Indaba 2016, at Emperors Palace on the 28th and 29th June, is to focus on and boost the growth potential of key industry sectors, namely: automotive, construction, metals, forestry, paper & packaging, chemicals, aerospace & defence, industry products and services, and to provide a platform for informative and interactive sessions with the prime movers of the nation’s manufacturing sectors.

For more info on this event, or to register for the **Small Business Indaba**, visit www.manufacturingindaba.co.za

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