

'Time for SA to think big'

Job creation through the manufacturing industry will be key to stimulating growth

THELMA NGOMA

DESPITE the recession, the country's manufacturing sector remains hopeful the industry will soon revive and provide at least one million jobs in the next decade.

André de Ruyter, chairman of Manufacturing Circle spoke at the manufacturing indaba this week and said it's time for South Africa "to think bigger".

"It's time that we move away from focusing on micro-businesses and think about creating businesses that hold the levers that can grow the economy. Proper industrialists should be focused on big business that will be the catalyst for growth, and global reach."

The government recently announced that R500m will be set aside for black industrialists to give an opportunity for black businesses and address the lack of equity when it comes to funding BEE deals," he said.

Davies said in many cases, blacks don't have access in huge amount of equity and that pushes them to rely on loans, leaving them with huge debt to face with in the long run.

He said that the Black Economic Empowerment Advisory Council agreed to speed up the programme of black industrialists which has seen a lot of progress to date.

"About 46 projects with the value investment of R4bn has been funded, creating nearly 8000 jobs".

"The numbers are proof that a target of 100 black industrialists will be reached by March 2018," he said.

Davies recently said the Black Economic Empowerment Advisory Council would be in consultation with Treasury



WORK IN PROGRESS: Businesses are urged to step up investment in empowering employees with the necessary skills in the face of rapid technological changes and shrinking economic growth. PICTURE: GETTY IMAGES

to see if it can inject billions into equity funds to boost black businesses.

"Industrialisation is already happening in South Africa. Radical economic transformation does not happen overnight. It takes time," he said.

De Ruyter said in the country's ailing economy, job creation through the manufacturing industry will be key to stimulating growth.

He said that skills training must begin at high school level where pupils are

identified to be nurtured and trained for the manufacturing sector. This will ensure that pupils grow into "world class trainees" that can make a contribution to the economy.

The fourth industrial revolution was also highlighted at the indaba where De Ruyter called for businesses to up-skill their workforce to effectively utilise their technologies.

These changes are to create opportunities for the youth, who form the bulk

of the country's unemployed.

The manufacturing indaba held in Johannesburg where insight into the opportunities for collaboration and adding value to other African countries was brought to light, bringing with them an understanding of the importance of promoting integrated regional markets and the ability it has to improve the chances of attracting FDI to South Africa and Africa alike.

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