

World class manufacturing at South Africa's fingertips

EKURHULENI - South Africa's continuing efforts to grow the manufacturing industry is slowly showing a tangible impact on the success factors contributing to economic growth, enabling the country to hold its own in the face of a trying environment. Manufacturing underlies the success of the most developed economies, and it can do the same for South Africa.

South African manufacturing continues to be heavily dominated by resource-processing sectors that are capital- and energy-intensive. A structural shift towards higher growth in more value-adding and a higher labour-absorbing manufacturing sector is essential for South Africa to shift to a development path which generates more growth and higher levels of employment.

The importance of building capacity and improving strategic sourcing and supplier development across government departments and State Owned Companies (SOC) remains another key focus. Private sector support for local procurement is showing progress, seeing a renewed focus on developments that will ensure that industrialisation and manufacturing happen locally.

Despite technology enabling organisations from all over the globe to collaborate, industry clusters in South Africa are an important topic for conversation. Their benefits go far beyond the obvious logistical advantages of the past. Organisations couldn't ask for more than the opportunity to thrive immersed in an environment that helps and supports it to do so. Industry and business clusters encourage innovation, competition, investment and partnerships, ultimately helping to build industrial powerhouses across the country.

Manufacturing is the only means of beneficiating natural resources and provides the base for developing the national infrastructure. Global manufacturing is changing at an exponential rate; and to be competitive, both locally and globally, manufacturers need to be in touch with changes in customer needs, the business environment and evolving manufacturing technologies.

Now more than ever, collaboration between the stakeholders is tantamount to the mobilisation of a manufacturing sector that is a growth engine for economic development, directly impacting on employment creation in South Africa.

Manufacturing has a critical part to play in South Africa, but it must be able to survive the relentless infiltration of international competition. It requires synchronised efforts from all involved domestically, which remains a very complex and dynamic challenge.

The **Manufacturing Indaba** provides the perfect platform to drive Africa's growth through productive face - time between the relevant stakeholders in the Manufacturing industry. It is a launch pad for key players to have their say and be a part of the way forward for this essential sector.