

Developing Skills for the Future in Preparation of Industry 4.0

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Johannesburg, 11 June 2018; As disruptive and ground-breaking technologies transform the global manufacturing industry, the Department of Trade and Industry (**the dti**), the Department Science and Technology and the Manufacturing Circle have partnered with the **Manufacturing Indaba 2018** to unpack what Industry 4.0 means for Manufacturers. Revolutionary technologies bring with them new concerns for industry players which this year's conference intends to address and discuss. The event will be hosted at the Sandton Convention Centre in Johannesburg, the business hub for Sub-Saharan Africa, on the 19th and 20th of June 2018.

Research has shown that more than one-third of jobs (5.7 million) in South Africa alone could be replaced by automation, following the onset of digital transformation. As this global technological evolution slowly unfolds in Africa, industries and industry leaders have the responsibility to prepare their workforces and manage this uncertain transition period.

The Fourth Industrial Revolution or Industry 4.0 as it is also known, is a concept described as the fundamental shift in business and social landscapes. It is essentially a fusion of technologies that blur the lines between the physical, digital, and biological spheres. Industry 4.0 has created rapid changes of innovative technology including AI, industrial robotics, smart factories, and machine learning that have consequently produced significant structural changes to the global economy. This has posed challenges on various policy makers who now, not only have to redefine skills policies, but also job profiles.

The absorption of these technologies remains a challenge for industries, and leaders are finding it difficult to strike a balance between the supply and demand for specialist skills in the market. Labour-displacement in developed, high-income countries is becoming apparent in the technology market, while developing nations have found that they lack the skills required to fill these positions. However, the decreasing cost of computing as well as industrial robotics has proven to be a light at the end of the proverbial tunnel for emerging markets, with low to middle income countries quickly gaining ground in the field.

The power and intellectual capacity of computers are quickly replacing routine task jobs previously held by semi-skilled and unskilled workers. This has subsequently raised questions concerning the job-security of these workers, who will either have to adjust to these new jobs or be absorbed into other positions or sectors. To appease these concerns, it is imperative that the government and private sector collaboratively action steps with businesses and industries to revise the core training of employees by up-skilling and re-skilling the Sub-Saharan workforce to keep pace with these developments. Prospective solutions to these pertinent concerns will be covered in-depth at the 5th annual Manufacturing Indaba.

Sub-Saharan Africa must choose to either embrace this technology wave and forge ahead with the rest of the developed world, or shy away and fall behind entirely. As Industry 4.0 continues to evolve, the way in which business is conducted offers a multitude of new and exhilarating opportunities for a wide scope of industries in the region. **The Manufacturing Indaba** is set to explore and unpack these opportunities, thereby emphasising the critical

importance to the Sub-Saharan manufacturing industry of adopting this technological transformation.

The Manufacturing Indaba 2018 aims to showcase industry best practices by incorporating the latest technology with tech-savvy employees to better equip industries during this time of change. This year's event seeks to introduce the merging of technology with the skills empowerment of employees to better facilitate the transition of industries and emerging businesses with the principles of Industry 4.0. In doing this, industry leaders in Sub-Saharan Africa will be better equipped to expedite this new and exciting evolution.