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MEDIA RELEASE

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Beneficiaries hail VTSD Retail Economy pilot project as a milestone

Mahikeng – The first of its kind VTSD Retail Economy project launched today by Premier Supra Mahumapelo of the North West Province has been lauded by its more than 100 beneficiaries as a ground-breaking initiative and a move in the right direction by the provincial government.

Initiated by the provincial government as part of boosting enterprise development and economies in the province's Villages, Townships and Small Dorpies, this pilot project which is implemented by the North West Development Corporation (NWDC), was launched at Ventersdorp and Potchefstroom respectively.

The beneficiaries who are mostly tuck-shops, hair salons and butchery owners from Mahikeng and JB Marks Local Municipalities, have already been trained on areas such as merchandising, customer care, financial management, supply chain processes and marketing among others, this in an effort to capacitate them to be competitive and relevant to the retail industry.

Addressing the beneficiaries who came in numbers to witness the first handing over of containers from which they will be running their businesses, and a warehouse from where beneficiaries will purchase their stock, Premier Mahumapelo challenged them to stay focused and work closely with the Chambers of Commerce for assistance on issues of provincial and national markets linkages.

“What we are doing today is part of actualising the objective of the National Development Plan which calls for collective efforts to deal with the triple challenges of poverty, inequality

and unemployment that is affecting our people in the villages, townships and small dorpies. We therefore call on all of you to remain committed to your businesses, and jealously protect these structures against any form of destruction”, said Premier Mahumapelo adding that the long term objective of this project is to make sure that everything that will be sold must be produced by our people, this as part of our VTSD Industrialisation plan.

Among other benefits brought by the VTSD Retail Economy project is that the beneficiaries will for the first time have the buying power as the product will be bought directly from the manufacturers, save on transport and delivery costs, while collective buying will ensure that beneficiaries take advantages of the economies of scale currently enjoyed by national retailers.

One of the beneficiaries, Dineo Makam (42), a tuck-shop owner from Potchefstroom, said this initiative couldn't have come at the right time. “I have been struggling to keep my business afloat as I was not making the desired profit, and at times not getting enough stock to sell. I am positive that this initiative will to a greater extent enable us to grow our businesses, since not only have our business skills been sharpened, but we will no longer spend much on traveling and delivery costs”.

The provincial government will be rolling-out this project to other identified townships in the province, the beneficiaries of which will also participate in a training and skills development programme. Moreover, mentoring and monitoring of the businesses supported will be intensified, and an impact assessment conducted over a period of two years.

Through this project that is targeting women, unemployed youth, people with disabilities and informal traders, a total of 125 jobs will be created at the 4 warehouses to be created across the province, an additional 200 jobs will be created for the construction of 50 containers while 300 jobs will be for the refurbishment of 50 shops.

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