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Black Business Council in the Built Environment and other industry bodies launch the 2025 Built Environment Indaba.

Johannesburg, 4 March 2025 – The Black Business Council in the Built Environment (BBCBE), supported by other industry bodies, today announced the launch of the 2025 Built Environment Indaba (BEI), a premier industry gathering that will convene key stakeholders to address pressing challenges and opportunities within South Africa’s construction and infrastructure sectors. The BEI is scheduled to take place on 10 and 11 April 2025 at the Gallagher Convention Centre in Midrand with a theme; *“Partnering with Government and Key Stakeholders to Deliver Infrastructure Projects Through Innovative Funding and Delivery Models”*.

As the largest federation bodies representing construction companies and professionals in the built environment, the BBCBE, South African Forum of Civil Engineering Contractors (SAFCEC) and Master Builders South Africa (MBSA) serve as the collective voice of the industry, advocating for a more inclusive, sustainable and well-regulated sector. The Indaba will provide a strategic platform for industry leaders, policymakers and practitioners to engage in critical discussions that will drive transformation, enhance industry integrity and improve project delivery across both the public and private sectors.

Danny Masimene, President of the BBCBE, emphasised the significance of this gathering, stating: “The Built Environment Indaba is more than just a conference — it is a call to action. We are bringing together the industry’s brightest minds to tackle challenges such as substandard project delivery, procurement inefficiencies and the scourge of construction mafias that threaten industry stability. The Indaba is a space for solutions, collaboration and the shaping of policies that will create a level playing field for all industry players.”

All these industry bodies continue to play an influential role in shaping legislation, ensuring that policies and regulations foster an enabling environment for meaningful transformation

across the entire construction value chain, including manufacturing and material supply. The industry bodies are also committed to strengthening procurement policies and skills development to empower emerging players and enhance industry competitiveness.

A critical focus of the Indaba will be expanding the sector's impact in underprivileged communities, addressing the urgent need for basic infrastructure services such as clean water, sanitation, electricity and reliable public transport. By aligning with the government's service delivery mandate, the built environment sector can drive economic growth and social upliftment where it is needed most.

"This Indaba is an opportunity for industry professionals to move beyond dialogue and into action," added Masimene. "We will emerge with clear implementation timelines and commitments that will shape the future of our sector. Our focus is on ensuring that transformation is not just a policy term, but a lived reality that benefits businesses and communities alike. We therefore know the collaborative approach of this indaba, will deliver an even bigger impact for the industry, which will include participation by key built environment ministries and private sector companies."

Speaking virtually at the media launch event, Deputy Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure, Sihle Zikalala, said; "We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the Black Business Council in the Built Environment sector under the leadership of the President, which we regard as a critical stakeholder in our journey to transform the property and construction sectors. Our current built environment industry has the capacity to develop clear solutions, timeframes, and commitments that will drive a structured three-year implementation plan. Through a phased approach, we envision collaborative efforts that will accelerate the transformation of the sector."

"The Department, represented here today, aligns with the National Infrastructure Plan, which integrates multiple sectors. Since the start of the 6th Administration in 2020, 62 projects have been conceptualised across green energy, fossil energy, water, transport and logistics and social infrastructure. These projects form a key part of South Africa's Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan, reinforcing infrastructure development as a pillar of economic growth and impact. As part of this commitment, we will soon be advertising various projects for private sector participation, particularly in build, operate and renovate models. A core focus will be optimising state-owned buildings for effective use while ensuring alignment with climate change priorities, particularly the transition towards green buildings."

He encouraged all stakeholders to actively prepare for the upcoming summit (Indaba) in April. "We must strengthen capacity within the sector. This includes equipping professionals such as property valuers, environmental specialists, estate agents, and other key stakeholders with the necessary skills to drive efficiency and innovation in planning and construction. Our mission is to build a more resilient, inclusive and high-performing infrastructure sector, fostering transformation and economic growth. We are inspired by the will and vision of our leaders, past and present, and remain committed to realising this collective goal."

During a panel discussion comprising various industry stakeholders, they all echoed the critical need for collaboration, transformation, skills development and proactiveness in the industry in influencing government to move with speed.

Remarks by Thabo Masombuka, Board Chairperson of the Construction Education and Training Authority (CETA):

“ We are pleased to see more collaborative programs focused on real implementation, particularly in creating opportunities for young people and black women in rural areas to participate meaningfully in the infrastructure sector. While conversations are important, it is time to move beyond dialogue and focus on tangible, time-bound action. Young people need more than just training – they need real opportunities for employment and skills absorption within the industry.”

“South Africa’s infrastructure sector is evolving rapidly, with global advancements in robotics, artificial intelligence, and modern construction methods shaping the future. We must ensure that our youth are equipped with the right skills to compete both locally and internationally. If we fail to prepare them, we are denying them the opportunity to thrive in a globally competitive industry.”

“Transformation remains a critical pillar of our efforts, but we recognise the pushback against it. There are forces actively working to resist change, using misinformation and lobbying to undermine progress. It is our responsibility to tell our own story and drive transformation at every level — big or small, practical or intellectual. We must ensure that today’s initiatives lead to real, lasting change, so that in 20 years, we can look back and say we truly transformed the sector rather than just engaging in discussions. The time for action is now.”

Remarks by Tshepo Chuene of the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA):

“The DBSA plays a critical role as an intergovernmental development and infrastructure finance institution, supporting projects that drive economic growth and social impact. Our approach ensures that every project incorporates a strong environmental and climate strategy while aligning with provincial development priorities — particularly in areas of youth, gender, and disability inclusion. Collaboration with CETA presents an opportunity to upskill and absorb young people into these projects, equipping them with the necessary skills for long-term impact.”

“Beyond financing large-scale infrastructure, we must also focus on maintaining and optimising existing infrastructure. The real opportunity lies in innovative solutions — whether in wastewater treatment, energy, or digital infrastructure — that can be developed by young entrepreneurs. DBSA aims to bridge the gap between industry needs and available financial instruments, leveraging partnerships with development finance institutions and private sector banks. To drive real transformation, the financial sector must align with the challenges faced by industries, ensuring collaborative efforts that deliver sustainable and impactful infrastructure solutions.”

Remarks by Tshegare Moletsane of the South African National Roads Agency Limited (SANRAL):

“SANRAL is committed to developing the next generation of skilled professionals in the infrastructure sector. Our leadership program ensures that young men and women who have completed their theoretical studies gain the necessary practical experience. Over the past financial year, we have enabled more than 1,000 learnerships, and our goal is to expand this to 5,000 in the coming years. This initiative, embedded in SANRAL’s DNA, aligns with our collaboration commitments to ensure structured training and meaningful skills development.”

“Through our Contractor Development Program, we aim to incubate and support 100% black-owned construction firms, particularly those in grades 5 to 7, by providing mentorship, resources, and on-site supervision for three to five years. Our focus is on sustainability, ensuring that these contractors are equipped with the skills, capacity, and financial backing to thrive beyond the incubation period. The program has been approved by our board, and by April, we will begin recruiting qualified contractors to participate. We look forward to working with industry stakeholders to successfully roll out this initiative and drive meaningful transformation in the sector.”

Remarks by Gregory Mofokeng, Executive Committee Member of Construction Sector Charter Council (CSCC):

“As a country, we must be decisive in addressing key economic challenges, particularly youth unemployment and access to opportunities. Negotiations that drag on indefinitely will not solve our problems. We need a clear formula for transformation — if a project is worth R100 million, a defined portion must be allocated to support youth development and practical experience. If an entity is unwilling to contribute to solving unemployment, it should not benefit from government projects. It’s that simple.”

“Access to funding remains a major barrier for young entrepreneurs and black-owned businesses. Too often, financial institutions focus on liquidity and equity rather than the viability of the business itself. This is why the Transformation Fund is critical — it provides the financial support needed to level the playing field. Despite scepticism from some quarters, we must stand behind the fund and ensure it delivers on its mandate. Without it, many black entrepreneurs will continue to be denied opportunities, regardless of the strength of their business ideas. Transformation is not just about policy — it’s about real action that ensures equitable access to economic opportunities for all.”

The 2025 BEI is set to be a milestone event that unites industry players and government in a shared vision of growth, transformation and ethical business practices. The Indaba is hosted by the BBCBE in partnership with CETA, CSCC, SAFCEC, MBSA, DBSA, SANRAL, Bargaining Council for the Civil Engineering Industry (BCCEI), Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB), Council for the Built Environment (CBE) and other strategic partners.

For more information visit <https://builtenvironmentindaba.africa/>

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For media inquiries, please contact:

Mr Edward Makwana
Founder and Managing Director
Makwana Public Relations (Pty) Ltd
Email: edward@makwanapr.com
Office: +27 68 235 1209