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Coca-Cola bottler launches R100m SME Supplier Development Fund

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Victor Nemukula, Director at Shumani (CCBSA supplier) and staff members exhibiting at the Supplier Development Conference. Photo: Supplied

DURBAN - Coca-Cola Beverages South Africa (CCBSA) has announced that it will make R100 million available over five years to support the growth and development of its black and black female-owned suppliers.

The announcement was made by CCBSA Financial Director Walter Leonhardt at the company's annual Supplier Development Conference. The conference theme was Collaborative and Inclusive Growth.

The new CCBSA SME Supplier Fund is aimed at supporting the growth and sustainability of black suppliers. It will make R20 million a year available over five years at preferential rates to help existing black- and black female-owned suppliers access the funding they needed to deliver on new and existing contracts.

The CCBSA SME Supplier Fund is intended to address the challenge of access to finance that most SMEs face when running their businesses," Leonhardt said.

CCBSA is also partnering with other fund managers in order to make it easier for smaller suppliers to access other funding sources as well. These finance partners were all represented at the conference.

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CCBSA Managing Director, Velaphi Ratshefola announced that the company had exceeded its target of diverting R3.9 billion of procurement spend to transformed suppliers over three years.



Exhibition during the CCBSA Supplier Development Conference. Photo: Supplied

Ratshefola said, "I am delighted to say that we exceeded our Year One target of R1.3 billion by R200 million—fully R1.5 billion of our procurement spend over the past year went to black- and black female-owned companies".

Ratshefola added that both initiatives should be seen within the context of the imperative to "accelerate inclusive economic growth and create jobs", one of the tasks President Ramaphosa urged the nation to commit itself to during this year's State of the Nation address. He

emphasised that this should be seen as a business imperative as the company would only succeed if the country as a whole succeeds.

Both Ratshefola and Busi Thusi, Procurement Transformation Manager at CCBSA stressed the importance of collaboration in achieving the goal of transforming CCBSA's procurement environment.

"It is through everybody's efforts, that CCBSA is able to support black businesses and is now well on target to meet its goal of becoming a Level 2 broad-based black empowerment contributor by 2021," said Leonhardt.

Thusi emphasised the importance of supporting the sustainability of suppliers, and to this end the company works with a number of partners to help suppliers at all phases of their life cycle improve their business practices in order to continue growing profitably.

CCBSA's Supplier Development Conference is now in its third year. It aims to provide a platform on which small, medium and micro enterprises can network with stakeholders such as government departments and entities, local municipalities, corporates, specialist development finance institutions the media, and industry and business organisations.

The conference targets specific suppliers operating in fleet maintenance, manufacturing plant spares and machinery, engineering and logistics, and packaging suppliers, creating opportunities for them to enter the supply chains of participating corporates.

This year's event attracted over 1 200 delegates. The conference programme featured presentations by CCBSA as well the Department of Trade and Industry's Black Industrialist Programme, among others. Breakaway sessions provided training in cash flow management, strategic planning for small businesses, governance and compliance, and digital strategy for start-ups and small businesses.

Alongside the conference, 120 SMMEs and 11 corporates mounted exhibitions to showcase their offerings. Several of the SMMEs exhibiting were suppliers who benefitted from CCBSA's programme to help suppliers become more sustainable.

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