

■ INVESTMENT



MAYOR Stevens Mokgalapa addressing opening day of the Tshwane Trade and Investment Summit at the CSIR yesterday. | HELENUS KRUGER City of Tshwane

# Hope to surpass R10bn target

*Rising mechanic hails summit for motivating her to pursue dream*

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FOR 23-year-old Matlhogonolo Mokgolo from Soshanguve, the 2019 Tshwane Trade and Investment Summit will go down in history as a platform which motivated her to pursue her dreams of being a motor mechanic.

She works for a company called Kgabo Cars, which was one of the 18 exhibitors showcasing its wares at the start of the two-day summit yesterday at the CSIR.

The summit is held under the theme "Partnering for Development: An investor-friendly Capital City", co-hosted by the Tshwane Economic Development Agency and the City of Tshwane.

Mokgolo, who joined Kgabo Cars in 2016 as a trainee, said: "I was 18 years when I decided to join the car industry to repair cars. I decided that I am going to do mechanical engineering."

The company specialises in car repairs and it inspired her to start her own company called Mokgolo Auto Service, to be based in Soshanguve Extension 2.

"At Kgabo Cars, I was taught how to change a tyre and to do an engine overhaul. We ladies don't have power like men. We work very gently. We service every car with care," she said.

She said her passion was to change the perception that mechanical careers were only for men.

"I would love to tell young women that although the industry is male-dominated, it is changing. I want to introduce this career to young women," Mokgosi said.

Echoing her sentiments was Tshwane Economic Development Agency chief executive Solly Mogaladi, who hailed the 18 SMMEs displaying their products at the conference as the future big giants in business.

"When you just look at them, these are not SMMEs. These are future big giants within the City."

Mogaladi expressed optimism that the summit would yield positive results in terms of attracting investments of R10 billion set by mayor Stevens Mokgalapa.

"The mayor has already announced that for this summit in particular there will be pledges that will be addressing the goal of attracting investment to the tune of R10bn," he said.

He believed the agency would surpass the goal because "already some of the commitments that are coming through are going towards that figure and that term is not yet over".

Close to 300 delegates from the business fraternity, 80 delegates from international businesses and government officials attended the summit.

"As the Tshwane Economic Development Agency in particular we set ourselves a goal of coming into the year with R1.8bn and we are already at R1.4bn."

Mokgalapa told potential investors that the capital city was ready and open for business.

"We have started in earnest turning the City into the destination of choice for investment."

He said the summit sought to market opportunities within the municipality to potential investors, and projected the City as a forward-thinking municipality on job creation.

He mentioned Ford Motor Company's decision to add a third shift at the Silverton plant in June next year, saying it would create over 1 200 jobs for locals.

He said the City had set itself a goal to create 104 000 jobs and to date it had created 60 000 through the expanded public works programme.

Exhibitors showcased projects worth R126bn with the potential to create about 700 000 jobs.

Mokgalapa spoke about the importance of taking into account challenges brought up by climate change.

"History has proven if we do not take climate change into cognisance as part of the broader risk management strategy this will affect our business model."



MATLHOGONOLO MOKGOLO manning the Kgabo Cars stand at the summit. | Rapula Moatshe

He emphasised the goal of the City to achieve at least its R10bn investment target, saying it was possible with the calibre of people at the conference.

Brett Hoppe, the general manager of Sun International's Time Square, challenged corporations in South Africa to embrace transformation.

He said businesses ought to fulfil their social responsibilities in communities and not only focus on growing themselves.

He urged them to always explore ways to create jobs.

The summit ends today.