

**the dti**Department:  
Trade and Industry  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**Government and Manufacturing Sector Need to Raise SA's Competitiveness – Minister Davies**

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The Minister of Trade and Industry, Dr Rob Davies says he was glad that government did not listen to the doomsayers who advocated that government should not support the clothing and textile industry, as what he saw at an exhibition in Pretoria showed that government had taken the right decision. He was speaking at the opening of the permanent exhibition site of the South Africa Technical Textile Cluster (SATTC) in Irene, Pretoria. The site is also showcasing the impact of government support for the cluster programme.

The cluster consists of the following five groups:

- Canvas and Tent
- Parachute Systems
- Stepahead Military Headwear
- Gelvenor Textiles
- Fields Wear

Minister Davies said that **the dti** has established this cluster and others to ensure that members work together in order to promote the sectors. He said that both government and manufacturers need to raise South Africa's competitiveness and to appreciate the role that government support programmes can play in encouraging the manufacturing sectors to embark on a journey to becoming more export competitive.

Minister Davies also stated that the previous incentive programmes based on the duty credit certificates were not working hence the department adopted a different strategy with the Competitiveness Improvement Programme.

According to him, the South Africa Technical Textile Cluster (SATTC) could benefit from government in different ways.

"First of all we have this tool of localisation which is called designation. All clothing and textile products which are procured by public entities in South Africa should come from local manufacturers using local raw materials. There also is a need for a deeper conversation with **the dti** on market access opportunities with some of the countries on the continent. We do have Foreign Economic Representatives on the continent that would be of great assistance with regards to market penetration," said Minister Davies.

Barend Pretorius of Parachute Systems, said that the cluster has assisted them in terms of coordination and marketing of their products.

"Working on the cluster configuration is so much easier to move out into the world marketing not only our product but also other members' products. We have agreed that we will market the products of other sector members when we go out of the country," said Pretorius.

The South Africa Technical Textile Cluster (SATTC) has also enhanced employment in the sector, thanks to government's interventions. SATTC is mainly focusing on the military, police, fire fighting, navy, and camping sectors.

Besides SATTC, there are other three clusters under textile and clothing that government is also spending millions on in order to promote and enhance the competitiveness of the sector. These clusters are:

- National Fashion Council
- Mohair Cluster
- South African Sustainable Textiles and Apparel Cluster

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