

## **Mhlobiso Concrete launches in Coega SEZ – SMME to Coega SEZ investor**



Mhlobiso Group Founder and Manager, Tando Mhlobiso

**Gqeberha, South Africa, 3 October 2022** - The Coega Development Corporation (CDC) is proud to announce the launch of Mhlobiso Concrete in Zone 5 of the Coega SEZ. Mhlobiso Concrete is a South African registered company, owned and managed by Mr. Tando Mhlobiso, a dynamic entrepreneur in the Eastern Cape business environment.

Mhlobiso Concrete is the youngest addition to Mhlobiso Group, which has a successful array of businesses, including Mantishe Construction, Mhlobiso Plant Hire, Mhlobiso Asphalt, Mhlobiso Transport and Mhlobiso Properties. Mhlobiso Concrete is supported by its sister companies, as a strategic fit in the existing group of businesses to deliver an integrated construction service to their customer base.

Like many fully-fledged enterprises, Tando Mhlobiso started small, with a vision and a plan. In 2009, Tando was a Coega Development Corporation SMME Development Programme recipient. “I registered Mantishe construction under the Coega SMME Development Programme in late 2009. Mantishe Construction is now grade 6CE and recently registered 6SB which is classified as highly specialised works,” he says.

For Unathi Maholwana, CDC SMME Programme Manager, this is a proud moment. “I remember Tando when he had a level 1 CIDB Grading. He has worked his way up and he has

come full circle," she says. Tando admits he once knew absolutely nothing about construction. "The SMME training was aggressive and at times stressful because the site was live and there were timeframes attached to the works, all these things I had to understand very quickly. When the project was done, I knew this was what I wanted to do, and I was ready take on the world, I was determined to make this work," says Tando.

The Coega SMME Development Programme assists SMMEs to become sustainable through raising awareness and encouraging BBBEE compliance; assisting BEE certificate attainment under the amended codes; and promoting the advancement of suppliers within the CDC's supply chain. Mhlobiso Concrete has already created 15 permanent jobs with indications of expansion in the future. Tando also has plans to introduce technical youth training programmes.

"It took me a good 16 years to get to where I am. I employ 150 employees across Mhlobiso Group. All our permanent employees have pension fund savings and medical aid allowance to secure their livelihoods in retirement including their health needs, this is something I'm deeply proud of," concludes Tando.

As a word of advice to entrepreneurs, Tando shares: "Dreams without goals are just dreams. Without commitment, you'll never start; without consistency, you'll never finish. Sometimes, it takes certain things to fall apart for better things to fall into place and regardless of your circumstances, push to be the person you were meant to be. No one said it was going to be easy, but I promise, there is no greater satisfaction than turning nothing into something."

ENDS