

SA exports locally-produced sanitisers for R1.66bn

The local production of hand sanitisers in South Africa has contributed to saving lives and earning export revenues for the country. This is according to data on South African exports of hand sanitiser products released by Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition Ebrahim Patel on Tuesday.



Credit: Sorapong via Pexels

Between June and November 2020, permits for the export of hand sanitisers to 30 other African countries totalled R1.66bn. These included exports to Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique and Botswana.

The Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (the dtic) said South African manufacturers for hand sanitiser have been building significant trading ties with other African countries during the Covid-19 pandemic.

“At the start of the pandemic, South Africa faced a shortage of hand sanitisers and industry worked with government to expand local production. Measures were put in place to regulate the export of hand sanitisers to ensure adequate local capacity and to encourage exports to other African countries.

“As soon as sufficient capacity was built up for local use, the International Trade Administration Commission (ITAC) issued permits to local companies to export product to other African countries,” Patel said.



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The Minister said the pandemic disrupted global supply-chains, which encouraged local production and innovation.

"South Africa has the continent's largest diversified industrial base and was able to use local know-how to roll out on scale the production of critical personal protective equipment, like sanitisers.

"As we build a more resilient economy, we will rely more on local innovation and industrial capacity. The legacy of Covid-19 is to underscore the importance of localisation, to create more jobs and enhance economic output," Patel said.

This past weekend, the Assembly of the African Union, chaired by President Cyril Ramaphosa, agreed to commence trading under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) on 1 January 2021.



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The AfCFTA Agreement, which will progressively reduce tariff and other trade barriers between African countries, is expected to boost manufacturing and trade across the continent.

The World Bank has estimated that successful implementation of the AfCFTA could increase African gross domestic product (GDP) by \$450bn or 7% per year and lift 30 million people across the continent out of extreme poverty by 2035.

"The work which South African manufacturers of Covid-19 essentials, like hand sanitisers, have done to build capacity and trading links across the continent during the pandemic will stand them in good stead as the AfCFTA comes into effect next month," the dtic said.

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