

Too little too late for small businesses

The President's latest announcement hinted at a move from Level 4 to Level 3 Lockdown at the end of May 2020 for most of South Africa, except the hotspots.



Mike Anderson, founder and CEO of National Small Business Chamber (NSBC)

Cape Town and Johannesburg, the two dominant areas for small businesses are firmly in the Covid-19 red zones, therefore uncertainty remains in these areas.

Even at Level 3, 75% of small businesses still have enormous restrictions on rights. During the course of May 2020, possibly more parts of retail will be opened up, the retail sector being the biggest employer. E-commerce restrictions are also likely to be removed.

“You cannot improve the health and well-being of a nation by making your country poorer, this has never been achieved by any country. The threat to small businesses and the livelihoods because of job losses in this sector and increased poverty is far greater than the threat to lives as a result of anything else” says Mike Anderson, founder and CEO of National Small Business Chamber (NSBC).

The latest announcements were too little, too late for many small businesses. A continued lockdown with no end in sight is not in the best interests of the small business sector and the economy. Small businesses need more direction and assurance so that they can plan and prepare.

“The recently launched Covid-19 Small Business Relief and Recovery Centre, powered by the NSBC is to help small businesses by doing whatever we can to take their pain away during this crisis and then to bring them back way after the pandemic has subsided. This could be years”, says Anderson.

“Small businesses are vital economic engines. A flourishing small business sector is the future of job creation. We have to ensure that we bridge businesses through these trying times. Our goal is to make sure businesses stay in business and that we keep workers employed”, notes Anderson.

“Our plea to the mercurial job creators within the small business sector throughout the nation is to hang in there. You are resilient and courageous and you must believe that you will triumph and come out stronger. Now is the time to stay calm, be positive, adapt, learn new things and try new things. Like Winston Churchill said, “If you are going through hell, keep going”, so don’t give up, you will be OK. The NSBC will keep fighting the good fight to get you back into business and help you to prosper; we ask you to keep fighting too”, concludes Anderson.

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