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BUSINESS AND GOVERNMENT URGED TO SCALE DELIVERY AS NBI MARKS 30 YEARS OF IMPACT

Johannesburg, South Africa - 24 April 2026 Business and government need to move beyond dialogue and into delivery if South Africa is to unlock meaningful growth. That was the central message at the National Business Initiative's (NBI) 30-year milestone celebration, held in Johannesburg last night.

Delivering the keynote address, President Cyril Ramaphosa reaffirmed the importance of stronger collaboration between the public and private sectors. He also welcomed the integration of the NBI's Technical Assistance and Mentorship Development (TAMDEV) unit into Operation Vulindlela Phase 2.

The event brought together leaders from government, business and civil society to reflect on three decades of partnership and to look ahead to what is required next. NBI CEO Shameela Soobramoney used the moment to issue a clear call to action, noting that the scale of South Africa's challenges demands a different way of working.

"Systemic constraints require systemic collaboration," she said. "Business must move from being an observer to an active partner in delivery, working alongside government to strengthen the foundations for growth."

Reflecting on the organisation's journey, Soobramoney emphasised the role that collective effort has played in shaping the NBI over the past 30 years.

"Business, you have built us. We are you and you are us. Government, you have trusted us to partner in delivery and together we have driven impact, sometimes visibly and sometimes quietly, but always with purpose."

Since its founding in 1995, the NBI has worked at the intersection of business and government to address some of South Africa's most pressing challenges, including unemployment, inequality, energy security and the climate transition.

Looking ahead, the organisation signalled a stronger focus on implementation and scale, turning collaboration into measurable outcomes.

"Success looks like a young person moving from unemployment into meaningful work. It looks like a small enterprise entering a value chain that was once closed to it. It looks like dignity restored through participation in the economy," Soobramoney added.

NBI Chairperson Cas Coovadia reflected on the organisation's long-standing commitment to responsible business.

"Sustainability has been championed by the NBI long before it became the focus it is today," he said, adding that this includes not only environmental responsibility, but also inclusive economic participation and market development.

President Ramaphosa also acknowledged the NBI's role over the past three decades, describing it as "a respected voice of responsible business action and a powerful agent for change."

As South Africa navigates a challenging economic environment, the event reinforced a shared view: deeper, more practical collaboration between business and government will be critical to unlocking growth and expanding opportunity.

After 30 years, the NBI's role remains focused on convening leaders, enabling partnerships and driving collective action towards a more inclusive and competitive economy.

The NBI acknowledges and thanks its 30-year milestone event sponsors: Nedbank, ENGIE, Exxaro Resources, Anglo American, Sasol, Sappi, Telkom, Aurex Constructors, Standard Bank, Astron Energy, Heineken and PepsiCo for their support in making the event possible.

INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE

NBI leadership is available for media interviews on:

- The evolving role of business in delivering South Africa's growth agenda
- NBI's role in Operation Vulindlela Phase 2
- Scaling solutions to address unemployment, infrastructure and energy challenges
- The NBI's priorities for the next decade

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