

Introducing Khula's new Managing Director

After an extensive search, Setlakalane Molepo was appointed by the Khula Board of Directors as Managing Director of Khula Enterprise Finance Ltd (Khula). Molepo's appointment was approved by Cabinet in April 2009, and he officially joined Khula at the beginning of June.

Molepo, is no stranger to the small and medium enterprise sector (SME), having recently completed a ten year tenure at the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC). In the last two years he headed the Metal, Transport and Machinery Products Strategic Business Unit, managing developmental oriented on-balance sheet funds to enable the IDC to accomplish its developmental mandate, namely development of SME sector. He managed to grow the portfolio of approximately R450 million on average over an 8-year period to around R800 million, with commitments of well over R1.5 billion. And he also managed approximately €59 million off-balance sheet funds and second round of funds for €50 million called Risk Capital Facility. These funds were earmarked for the development of the SME sector owned by Black Economic Empowerment or Historically Disadvantaged Individuals with a primary focus on job creation.

According to Molepo, it is exciting to be joining Khula at this point in time as it presents him with an opportunity and challenge to make a difference in the SME sector through the Khula Direct retail model and other existing suite of Khula products. "I want to instil a sense of urgency in ensuring that we implement the Khula Direct lending model so that we can deliver on our mandate as the expectations are immense. We have a God-given opportunity to be stewards during this time in the history of our country and we should carry out our mandate with integrity, dignity and honour." he says.

He graduated from the University of the Witwatersrand and served his articles of apprenticeship as a Civil Engineer with Lillicrap Crutchfield (Pty) Ltd, Ellmer Partnership (Pty) Ltd and BKS Inc, as a Design Engineer culminating into a Project Engineer on commercial buildings, shopping centres and warehouses in the structural engineering discipline. Although Molepo's training is rooted in the engineering discipline, he further received formal training at graduate business schools and development finance institutions respectively, which led to his passion for the SME sector. The leadership and financial management experience he acquired from the IDC and his previous employment have ensured that he is a well-rounded leader ready to take on the challenges of an organization such as Khula to the next level.

Molepo enters Khula at a difficult time in the global economy, and to the local SME sector, his views on this situation are that “due to the global economic meltdown, sustainability and existence of many SMEs are in doubt. At Khula we need to ensure that we aggressively implement our support programmes to SMEs, which amongst others include the Mentorship Programme.” explains Molepo

“My vision is to ensure that Khula remains the development finance institution of choice for access of funding to SMEs in South Africa. The organisation has made great strides in the past five years to ensure that SMEs continue to have access to finance and related services. Progress made over the last 5 years speaks for itself, my role is to ensure that we continue where my predecessor left-off and in addition, implement the Khula Direct lending model soonest.” he concludes.