**Media Statement**

**Heading: The Impact Catalyst hosts virtual workshop on Limpopo Development Plan 2020-2025**

A virtual workshop was held on 26 October to discuss opportunities for the private sector to become involved in the ongoing refinement of the Limpopo Development Plan (LDP) 2020-2025. The development of the plan has been spearheaded by the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), the Office of the Premier (OTP) in Limpopo and Zutari, all members of The Impact Catalyst.

The Impact Catalyst focuses on addressing socioeconomic challenges such as alleviating poverty and inequality through job creation and improved healthcare. With such a powerful vision, The Impact Catalyst has already successfully managed to bring together various companies, including Anglo American, Exxaro and World Vision South Africa. All are committed to the same goals and are forging a common agenda to deliver on the vision of the initiative.

Delivering the opening address at the workshop, OTP Deputy Director General (DDG) **Esme Magwaza** said that the draft LDP 2020-2025, which is currently being finalised, is an expression of the aspirations of the people of Limpopo. The first five-year tranche is the initial step towards Limpopo’s Vision 2045. “We are excited at the involvement of The Impact Catalyst, which represents the private sector, as such partnerships are critical to assist us in achieving the momentous task of putting the province on the map,” said DDG Magwaza.

Economic growth cannot be achieved by a single entity, pointed out **Charl Harding**, Manager of The Impact Catalyst. “It cannot be realised by government or the private sector alone. To really drive economic growth, we have to work together towards a common vision. Whether an SME or a large corporate, the context is very different. That is why it is important to have these discussions to align our different expectations and perspectives.” Thus the workshop was an important platform to build on what has been achieved with the draft LDP 2020-2025 to date, focusing on three key areas:

* **What must government do to make your industry more competitive?** Government is an enabler to grow the economy, but unfortunately this cannot be done without the private sector and entrepreneurs taking the initiative to invest in opportunities and thereby generate much-needed employment.
* **Where is your specific industry or sector headed?** We all need to prepare for the future by having a long-term vision. In terms of mining and agriculture, that future lies in increased mechanisation and automation. Rather than large-scale retrenchments, this represents an opportunity to proactively retrain people and develop new skills.
* **What support can industry provide to the government?** The government and private sector enjoy a two-way partnership that aligns them to work together for a common future.

Zutari Project Lead **Sanri Rademeyer** explained that the purpose of the workshop was to identify future enablers to make specific industries or sectors competitive for the future, as well as how to determine the best way to contribute to economic growth in the province. A prime example of this was to identify joint actions or programmes that could be undertaken by the government and the private sector, especially with regard to readying the province for the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

“It is important that the LDP 2020-2025 not only be seen as a plan, but as a platform for implementation in order to create the necessary economic impact,” highlighted Rademeyer. Here a key focus was to identify development nodes or clusters that could also support local community empowerment. The workshop focused on several cluster discussions.

The first was Agriculture, Tourism, Environment, Climate Change and Transportation, which emphasised that the province needed to make use of existing resources in order to maximise their economic impact. This was also critical to position Limpopo as a developmental hub for the rest of Africa.

The Mining, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Waste Economy Cluster highlighted that these industries were key to economic growth and getting the province on a new developmental path. Here the necessary enablers were access to water and energy, the negative impact of social instability due to job losses due to the Covid-19 pandemic, and the existing skills gap.

The LDP 2020-2025 is currently being finalised amidst the unprecedented Covid-19 impact. The Impact Catalyst provided targeted support to enrich the baseline for the plan and to model the impact of the pandemic as well as climate change on the province. These findings were presented at the workshop, where it was revealed that the Limpopo economy was expected to recover strongly, in line with the rest of the country. While some industries like construction will likely take longer to recover, mining and business services may even overshoot the old baseline.

The LDP 2020-2025 seeks to ensure that all government resources are channelled towards creating an enabling environment, offering opportunities to the people Limpopo to be active beneficiaries of sustainable growth and development, which can improve their quality of life,” noted Rademeyer. The Impact Catalyst continues to strengthen public-private partnerships by providing domain expert input and facilitation of collaborative sessions between the province and industry partners in developing the LDP 2020-2025.

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