

SAFI Furniture Sector Forum demonstrates how cohesion can grow the industry

“To have South African designed and manufactured furniture in every home and workplace in Africa and beyond, is a key aspiration for the South African Furniture Initiative,” Penwell Lunga, chairperson of SAFI, said at the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Furniture Sector Forum. The forum was recently held in Sandton.

According to Lunga, it is SAFI’s objective to build a globally competitive and transformed furniture industry that shapes lives in every home, school and workplace cannot be achieved alone. “We believe that by taking the theme of the Furniture Sector Forum, namely, **Cohesion: Better is Together** on board, we can launch into the future as a team.”

During his presentation, Lunga highlighted four strategic priorities on how SAFI can take the knowledge and know-how of industry stakeholders and combine it with SAFI’s access to policymakers and markets to grow and nurture the furniture sector.

By aligning market access, trade interventions and remedies, market intelligence and skills development with the Furniture Industry Master Plan (FIMP), Lunga outlined specifics on how to ensure the success of these priorities and SAFI’s.

“We want to be leaders in creating market development opportunities, including local raw material supply as well as driving an increase in public and government procurement of locally manufactured school and office furniture,” he told the attendees. “Furthermore, we must STOP the illegal import of products and build much-needed skills development in the furniture industry.”

Taking centre stage in its role of connector for an industry made up of many small and medium-sized enterprises without access to policymakers, local and international markets and manufacturers, SAFI believes that quality standards are instrumental in ensuring differentiation in the industry’s local sector product offering compared to the many imported products entering the South African markets.

“We, as an industry, have to make sure that we are providing a quality product, exceeding that of our international competitors, backed by a guarantee,” Lunga emphasised.

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In summary, SAFI is poised to work together with industry stakeholders to create market access opportunities to grow the industry, align relevant policies, drive competitive manufacturing and support sustainable raw material supply.

“We need everyone to get involved, to be part of a growing industry on the cusp of becoming globally competitive where we all can achieve our common goal by believing in cohesion, where together is better,” Lunga concluded.

Ends.

Issued on behalf of the South African Furniture Initiative by Panthera Media. For more information, please contact Winton Windell at [Winton@pantheramedia.co.za](mailto:Winton@pantheramedia.co.za) or 071-229-5779.