

Furniture Sector Forum to discuss core industry issues online

The 3rd Annual Furniture Sector Forum, presented by the South African Furniture Initiative (SAFI) with key stakeholders will take place online on **3rd November 2021** at 10:00am to 13:00pm.

According to Bernadette Isaacs, Managing Director of SAFI, the forum aims to be a knowledge-sharing platform in support of furniture manufacturing and design. “As we celebrate our 5-year SAFI anniversary this year, we will be reflecting on the furniture industry’s historical and recent challenges and share why we feel there is still a lot to be excited about for the future of our industry,” Isaacs said.

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, the SAFI, in partnership with Proudly South African and the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (DTIC), established the Furniture Sector Forum in 2019 to provide a knowledge-sharing platform on furniture specific market intelligence, training, mentoring and support initiatives.

Since last year’s Forum, the Furniture Industry Master Plan (FIMP) was adopted on 29 March 2021, which consequently brought about the reorganising of SAFI into seven chambers. “Each Chamber focuses on its specific sector in the industry by accommodating the segments of the industry as outlined in the FIMP, we are able to enhance the participation of SMMEs and focus on strategic relationships with stakeholders in the value chain,” Isaacs said.

She emphasised how the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent enforced lockdowns had an immense effect on imports and exports as well as the availability of raw materials, while new product lines to accommodate work-from-home had to be developed and designed.

“To exacerbate the situation, the country had to contend with the civil unrest and accompanying looting during July, with devastating effects to the furniture manufacturing and retail industries,” she said.

“With many people in the sector working for both the large and SMMEs being affected, it was inspiring to take note of the resilience of the people and how communities and businesses committed themselves to grow and invest into the country.”

Despite these challenges, the past 18 months saw the sector laying the foundation to enable the local furniture manufacturing industry to grow its manufacturing footprint in the country.

“I believe in the industry’s potential to become a key contributor to the country’s GDP, however, collaboration between government, business and labour is key to the successful implementation of the FIMP, thereby assisting the industry to become more globally competitive while supporting the local value chain,” Isaacs said. “The holistic approach of the furniture industry towards sustainability, the environment and innovation is a revelation that will be supported and expanded by the SAFI’s Objectives.”

These topics and many more will be discussed at the SAFI Furniture Sector Forum, and registration to attend is free. Delegates will be able to take part in the conversation and participate in the many facets of the South African Furniture Value Chain. To register for FREE click here:

https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_8KAXRzyjRBmHkDWdzusLBw

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 or 071-229-5779.