



Media Release

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Business for Development (B4D) Pathfinder Launched

"This initiative offers a system that enables businesses to navigate an uncharted path to sustain their own growth and profitability," said former President Benjamin Mkapa as he launched the initiative, "while at the same time directly contributing to sustainable development in the region by including the poor in their growth path. It is new. It is daring. It is doable...and it is replicable. That is why it is called a pathfinder."

Businesses and social development organisations packed into the room at the Radisson hotel in Sandton, Johannesburg, for the much- anticipated launch of the Business for Development (B4D) Pathfinder on 28 October.

The launch paves the way for the Southern Africa Trust and the SADC Employers' Group to embark on a consultation and engagement campaign with key role players at all levels targeting business, government, and civil society institutions to embrace the B4D Pathfinder.

"The B4D Pathfinder is anchored on the notion that not just political governance, but also *business* can be inclusive. It embraces corporate social responsibility but goes beyond that to enable the empowerment of communities. In other words, it puts the community rather than the company at the centre of focus in the core business strategy. In this way, it takes into account the whole social system in which a company operates," said Mkapa.

The B4D Pathfinder offers the opportunity to bring together businesses, the community, and governments; harnessing their respective strengths to combat underdevelopment and its economic and social symptoms.

It is based on a model that can create more wealth and spread it more widely. It puts business at the core of development, whilst recognizing that the local community can also be in business through their participation in the core business value chain. It affirms the *good* business is good for development, and that development is good for business too.

Firms which are proactive and include the community in their core value chain have not only been successful in expanding their market share, but the size of the market itself over a short period of time. They have been able to reduce costs, adapt their products to the needs of the community, withstand the challenge of competition, and remain more resilient to global economic shocks.

The B4D Pathfinder offers a comprehensive system that includes a voluntary charter to express shared commitment and aspiration, a barometer that provides a roadmap to measure progress across multiple indicators of inclusive business, and a toolkit to support business along the journey towards inclusive business. It supports the development of inclusive business as the gold standard in corporate social responsibility.

The Pathfinder is driven by Southern Africa Trust and the SADC Employers' Group and was launched by the former President of Tanzania, His Excellency, Benjamin Mkapa.

The Southern Africa Trust is an independent non-profit agency that supports deeper and wider regional engagement to overcome poverty in southern Africa. Go to www.southernafricatrust.org for more information.

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