

Zuma: The need for black industrialists not racist

The need for black industrialists in the economy is not aimed at creating racism but rather at ridding the country of it, says Jacob Zuma...



"We wanted to see more factories and other means of production being owned by black people for us to be able to say we are achieving economic transformation. You don't need to be shy about it. It is not racism in reverse, it is in fact uprooting and getting rid of racism," said the President on Wednesday.

The President was addressing the Department of Trade and Industry's Black Industrialists Indaba in Midrand.

The indaba seeks to advance government's key developmental objectives of industrialisation, skills development, job creation, localisation and supplier development. This is so as to help create and develop black industrialists and entrepreneurs.

"We are gathered here today to take forward that conversation about how to ensure that our Industrial Policy Action Plan (IPAP) enables us to achieve transformation by expanding opportunities to black entrepreneurs," explained the President.

"We are not bringing racism in reverse; we are actually eradicating racism in our society," he said, adding that the history of the country of economic development has been structured and rooted in race.

The country is from an entrenched race economy that needs to be deracialised, he said.

"You can't deracialise it by not talking about race," he told delegates at the two-day indaba that kicked off yesterday.

Mixed economy needed

The President said that the country needs a mixed economy if it is to rid itself of challenges like unemployment and create employment.

In addition, the President said that South Africans should be proud of the advancements made by Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) legislation so far, however there are still segments of the economy that are facing challenges as shown by the level of participation of black people.

Only 3% of black people own the Johannesburg Stock Exchange which, he said, points to the need to accelerate economic transformation.

There was also a need for black participation in the manufacturing sector. "We believe there is room for black industrialists in manufacturing," he said, adding that this sector is one of the least transformed sectors in the country.

"We believe that the black industrialist's policy framework is the right formula to transform the industrial landscape."

Last year, the dti launched the Black Industrialists Development Programme, which is intended to promote the participation of black industrialists as manufacturers for the key sectors identified in the IPAP and other related sectors.

According to the programme, the President needs to take into consideration the participation of women, youth and people with disabilities.

Not just a slogan

He said that transformation which is necessary is not merely a slogan but a reality because poverty, inequality was brought by radical deprivation.

"When we say radical transformation, it's not just a slogan. We've got to be radical to reverse that if you don't do so we're going to remain where we are.

"We have an opportunity to shape this country the way we want to, instruments are there," said President Zuma, adding that the indaba must come up with tangible results.

"We need to make this gathering a historic one," he said.

Earlier in the day, Gauteng MEC for Economic Development said the country needs to breathe new life into the economy as well as build new black industrialists.

"We need black industrialists, if we don't create genuine, hardworking industrialists we won't achieve the objectives of the National Development Plan," he said.

Meanwhile, business woman Dr Anna Mokgokong said that transformation is lagging behind.

"We can't be passive passengers in our economy, we need to roll up our sleeves," she said, while dti Deputy Minister Mzwandile Masina said that there is a need to reverse the racial dominance that is in the economy.

The indaba will conclude today.