

# Free State Government Supports Cooperatives

Co-operatives are a critical component of government's enterprise development strategy to grow and increase participation in the economy and enable citizens to come up with self employment creation initiatives. Government has decided to prioritise cooperatives and recognise their ability in reducing poverty levels, creating employment and stimulating economic development, and this can only be achieved through providing support for the development of cooperatives in the Province.



In his address, the Premier of the Free State Mr Magashule praised the cooperatives for the amazing work they are doing, encouraged those who are unemployed to start businesses and become their own bosses. One of the exhibitors, Mr Fanyana Ben Twala (founder of Thabo Grass Weaving), expressed how grateful he was to be part of the expo, "I have learned a lot over the past two days, ways on how to improve and protect my business".



*Premier of the Free State Mr Magashule and MEC for Social Development Me Ntombela making a purchase at exhibition.*

The Expo was divided into two section, the exhibition side and the informative session where cooperates were informed on how they can grow and sustain their businesses, amongst many. They were also divided into commissions where they were able to state their problems and then present them to the three departments for resolutions and a way forward.

Mr Twala produces hats, bags, waist coats and mats out of grass, his products are one of its kind. At the expo he received advice on how to get patent rights for his business. That's amongst some of the things the cooperatives owners were taught at the expo.

The Expo was the first of its kind and was jointly organized by Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs and Social Development and will be held annually targeting other municipalities.