

'I SUPPORT GEORGE' Less aid, let's trade

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The Foundation for the Development of Africa (FDA) is using George as the pilot city to roll out its "I Support Africa" campaign which is aimed at stimulating the African economy through creating increased trade and business opportunities.

A group of community leaders from George gave their unanimous support for the local pilot campaign, "I Support George" after listening to an introduction by the FDA at Fancourt last week.

"I Support George" will focus on facilitating local business and other initiatives that are conducive to sustainable development, starting a campaign that will eventually span the whole continent.

The campaign stands on two legs. Firstly, local products and services (in the informal and formal sector) are to be listed and showcased through the FDA's extensive database on its different web sites. This process will be driven by a local co-operative.

"Through the FDA's database, businesses and individuals can get their products and services into the international market - properties, golf courses, community projects, etc. We can put people into contact with people," said FDA Chairman Peter Metcalfe.

The other leg of the campaign is part of the Africa Trade Centre video conferencing or TelePresence network which currently comprises 282 'stations' soon to be ATC host centres throughout the world. These host centres will now be deployed throughout the continent, two of which will be based here at Oubaai and Fancourt. They



At the presentation of the Foundation for the Development of Africa at Fancourt were (from left) Bishop Donald Harker, Stewart Tracey of Vodacom Golf Village, FDA Chairman Peter Metcalfe, Mike Henson, FDA director: event facilitation, Dr Warren Burns, environmental specialist and Ina le Roux, FDA director of Women Development. Photo: Alida de Beer

will offer state-of-the-art video-conferencing facilities aimed at providing an international trading platform for African business.

Become involved

Georgians may become involved by adding their name to the "I support George" campaign as well as by adding their products and services to the national database. This is for FREE.

Should a business or individual require more exposure to his product/service, a fee

proportionate to the exposure will be levied. Local revenue generated from this database will be distributed in a ratio of 60% to the local Africa Trade Centre co-operation and 40% to the national Africa Trade Centre that will cross-subsidise villages and communities that do not have formal business environments to sustain their own co-operations.

The local co-op will be promoted to local retailers and will identify products (in the informal and formal sectors) that may meet

the requirements and quality for export purposes. Funding received from the Trade Centre will also be used for the purchasing of products for which markets will be secured, said Metcalfe.

The possibility of franchising the trade centre concept throughout Africa is also being investigated with interest already surfacing from Nigeria.

An official launch of the co-operation in George will be held later this year where a management committee will be announced. An operational manual provided by the Africa Trade Centre will be handed over to the committee at this occasion.

Metcalfe called on business and other organisations to become involved. "Eventually, we also wish for people on ground level to initiate and implement business projects, no matter how insignificant, that would lead to job creation and the stimulation of the economy."

He said positive participation was prerequisite for the success of the campaign. "Participate proactively by trading locally and supporting local products and services."

The *George Herald* is already on board and has agreed to provide ongoing publicity to the campaign.

Visit www.isupportgeorge.co.za for more information.

■ The FDA has been existence for 10 years. The Africa Trade Centre is partnered with LGBN (Local Government Business Network),

For more information on the FDA and ATC, visit www.africa-trade-centre.com and www.foundation-development-africa.org.