

Closing Remarks: Ms Amelia Naidoo
Acting CEO, Productivity SA
IMD World Competitiveness Yearbook 2025 Launch
Theme: *From Insight to Action: Strengthening National Competitiveness*
18 June 2025

Deputy Minister of Employment and Labour, Ms Judith Nema
Tshabalala, Acting Board Chairperson, members of the board present,
Colleagues from IMD and Productivity SA,
Esteemed guests, partners, and members of the media, ladies and gentlemen

As we conclude today's programme, allow me to express my deep gratitude—for your presence, your engagement, and most importantly, your commitment to the hard, necessary work of rebuilding South Africa's competitiveness.

The 2025 IMD World Competitiveness Yearbook results have been laid bare. South Africa now ranks 64th out of 69 countries. This is a sobering reflection of the deep structural challenges we face across government, business, infrastructure, and our economy at large.

But this is not a moment to retreat. It is a moment to reflect, to reset, and to rally. These results are not a verdict—they are a diagnosis. And like all good diagnoses, they point us to where the healing must begin.

This year's theme, ***From Insight to Action***, reminds us that competitiveness is not built by reports—it is built by the decisions we take after the reports are released.

What we have heard today—about our lagging productivity, our unemployment crisis, and our infrastructural constraints—requires a response that is bold, coordinated, and sustained.

At Productivity SA, we are ready to lead that response. But we cannot do it alone.

To truly improve our national competitiveness, three things must happen:

1. **We must make productivity a national development priority.**
That means embedding productivity improvement into industrial policy, public sector performance, and enterprise support frameworks.
2. **We must strengthen public-private collaboration.**
Competitiveness is not the job of government alone. We need inclusive dialogue and co-creation between business, labour, and the state to identify real bottlenecks and practical solutions.

3. **We must empower enterprises—especially SMMEs—with tools, knowledge, and systems to thrive.**

Productivity is built at the ground level—on factory floors, in offices, in public institutions. That's where transformation happens. And that's where Productivity SA is already making a difference.

As the Deputy Minister rightly highlighted, Productivity SA's role is not only technical—it is strategic. It is national. It is catalytic.

We welcome government's continued support, and we are committed to:

- Scaling productivity programmes across more sectors and provinces
- Informing economic and employment policy through robust research and data
- And strengthening our partnerships to drive impact where it matters most

In Closing

Let us not see this launch as the end of a process—but as the beginning of a new commitment. A commitment to action, to accountability, and to inclusive growth.

The journey ahead will not be easy. But it is necessary. And if we move forward together—with honesty, urgency, and shared purpose—we can turn these insights into impact.

“You can't change what you refuse to confront. And you can't grow what you don't commit to.”

Let us confront our challenges. Let us commit to growth. Let us work—together—to build a competitive, productive, and prosperous South Africa.

Thank you.