

**OPENING ADDRESS – MS. BEVERLEY JACK, ACTING CHAIRPERSON OF THE
PRODUCTIVITY SA BOARD**

LAUNCH OF THE IMD WORLD COMPETITIVENESS YEARBOOK 2025

**THEME: “FROM INSIGHT TO ACTION: STRENGTHENING NATIONAL
COMPETITIVENESS”**

DATE: 18 JUNE 2025

Deputy Minister of Employment and Labour, Ms Judith Nemadzinga-Tshabalala, Esteemed representatives from the IMD World Competitiveness Centre, Colleagues from the Productivity SA Board, government, business, academia, and labour, Distinguished guests, partners, and members of the media, Ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning.

It is a great honour to welcome you all to this significant occasion—the official launch of the **2025 IMD World Competitiveness Yearbook (WCY)** results for South Africa.

Let me begin by expressing our deepest appreciation to Deputy Minister Nemadzinga-Tshabalala for joining us today, and for the Department’s continued commitment to productivity as a national lever for inclusive growth and employment. Your presence here powerfully affirms the importance of aligning competitiveness with policy, transformation, and employment outcomes.

I would also like to acknowledge our valued partners from the IMD World Competitiveness Centre, particularly Dr José Caballero, Senior Economist, and Mr William Milner, Associate Director, for their unwavering support and global expertise in helping countries navigate their competitiveness journeys.

The theme of today’s event, **“From Insight to Action: Strengthening National Competitiveness”**, is both timely and urgent. It reminds us that data alone does not

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change economies, action does. The value of today's engagement lies not in the metrics themselves, but in what we do with them. This launch must serve as a catalyst for turning evidence into strategy, and strategy into impact.

This report offers us a clear and honest reflection of where South Africa stands in the global economy. But more importantly, it gives us the insight to drive reforms, align systems, and make decisions that will shape a more competitive, productive, and inclusive future.

To understand why this study matters so deeply, we must ask: *What is competitiveness?*

Competitiveness is a country's ability to create and sustain an environment in which enterprises can thrive and citizens can prosper. It is not about international comparisons for their own sake. It is about asking: ***“Are we unlocking the full potential of our people, institutions, and economy?”***

And at the centre of competitiveness is **productivity**. Productivity is the engine of competitiveness—it is how efficiently we convert ideas, capital, and labour into value. When productivity stalls, competitiveness weakens. But when productivity improves, economies grow, livelihoods are transformed, and nations rise.

That is why **Productivity SA** exists: to drive productivity improvement across enterprises and sectors, support evidence-based policymaking, and contribute to a more dynamic and inclusive economy.

The IMD World Competitiveness Yearbook is both a diagnostic tool and a strategic roadmap. It helps us understand not just where we are, but why we are there, and what we must do to shift course.

As IMD's official information partner in South Africa since 1989, **Productivity SA** is proud to coordinate the national data inputs and facilitate the Executive Opinion Survey among our country's business leaders. But our role does not stop there.

Our mandate is to translate those insights into actionable strategies, linking productivity gains to competitiveness outcomes and ultimately, to national prosperity.

This launch is a call to decision-makers, change-makers, and nation-builders. The report we release today is not meant to sit in a report shelf, it is designed to spark bold conversations, inform difficult decisions, and inspire collective movement toward national renewal.

Let us reflect. Let us reimagine. But above all, let us **act**.

As we await the official release of South Africa's 2025 results by our Acting Chief Economist, Ms Juliet Mashabela, let us approach the findings with the readiness to respond—because true leadership lies in the courage to face facts and forge a better way forward.

Let me end with the words of renowned management thinker, Peter Drucker, who said:

“What gets measured, gets managed—and what gets managed, gets improved.”

This quote captures the very essence of the IMD World Competitiveness Yearbook. The study provides us with a comprehensive and credible measurement of South Africa’s national competitiveness. But its real power lies in what we choose to do with the information. By measuring our performance honestly and consistently, we create the conditions to manage our weaknesses, strengthen our systems, and ultimately improve our competitiveness, not only in global rankings, but in the lived reality of our people and enterprises.

On behalf of the Productivity SA Board, I thank you all for being part of this journey, for your presence, your partnership, and your commitment to building a South Africa that competes, thrives, and delivers shared prosperity for all.

Thank you.