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Media Statement

For Immediate Release

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City of Johannesburg Empowers Informal Traders with Smart Trading Permits

The City of Johannesburg Executive Mayor, Cllr Dada Morero, together with Member of the Mayoral Committee (MMC) for Economic Development, Cllr Nomoya Mnisi, and MMC for Group Corporate and Shared Services, Cllr Sithembiso Zungu, recently handed over smart trading permits to informal traders operating in the Inner City.

The event marks a significant milestone in the City's commitment to transforming and formalising the informal trading sector. The initiative, championed by the Department of Economic Development (DED), introduces a transparent and digital system that assists informal traders in registering through newly launched smart trading cards.

"This initiative marks an important milestone for the City of Johannesburg. We are not undermining small businesses, we are regularising and ensuring order and discipline in the informal trading sector. All the traders you see here have been vetted, approved, and allocated designated trading spaces. They have also been issued with smart cards containing their registration details, allowing the City to monitor and support them effectively," said Executive Mayor Cllr Sello Dada Morero.

Echoing the Mayor's sentiments, MMC for Economic Development Cllr Nomoya Mnisi highlighted that the introduction of smart cards is a crucial step towards restoring order, accountability, and professionalism within the informal trading environment.

"Today marks another step forward in our efforts to renew and professionalise the City's trading spaces. We are introducing new smart cards that cannot be duplicated and that link directly to the verified details of each trader," said Cllr Mnisi.

"These cards feature unique QR codes that can only be accessed by authorised City officials, ensuring authenticity and preventing corruption. Through this system, we are building an efficient, transparent process that benefits both traders and the City," she explained.

Mnisi added: "This programme is a multi-departmental and multi-sphere government initiative. It involves the City, SAPS, and other agencies working together to ensure that trading spaces are occupied only by verified, law-abiding traders. Our verification process ensures compliance with health and safety, trading regulations and, importantly, it protects the livelihoods of many women and families who depend on informal trading to make a living,"

Morero added that the City remains committed to building a fair and inclusive economy where informal traders can operate with dignity and stability.

“The Department of Economic Development will continue to visit traders regularly to ensure compliance with trading and safety laws, while the Department of Community Development will provide training and support programmes. We are creating a city that is organised, safe, and inclusive, where everyone can trade and thrive. Johannesburg is on the right track to becoming a great city once again, a place of opportunity for all,” he said.

To qualify, traders must be South African citizens currently trading within the city. The first step involves registering at the City’s jurisdictional office located at Number 66 Jorissen Place in Braamfontein.

Applicants must bring:

- A certified copy of their South African ID,
- Proof of residence,
- Details of their trading location (stall number),

This information is used to link traders with the Joburg Property Company (JPC), which manages rental payments for trading spaces in city markets and designated or demarcated trading zones. Once the trader’s details are verified and confirmed to be legitimate, they are onboarded into the City’s Informal Trading Permits System.

Traders selling cooked food must also obtain a Certificate of Acceptability (CoA) from Environmental Health, and where open flames or stoves are used, a Fire Safety Certificate from Emergency Management Services (EMS) is required.

For non-South African traders, the process is guided by the Immigration Act, which governs who may trade legally in the Republic of South Africa.

Once approved, traders are onboarded and issued a smart trading card. Each card is uniquely linked to the trader’s profile and trading number, which includes enhanced security features such as a QR code. This allows authorised City officials to verify trader information on-site, confirming the trader’s identity, trading location, and registered assistants.

“Only designated officials have the right to scan these cards, this prevents misuse and ensures that traders are not harassed or interrupted during their business operations”. said Cllr Mnisi.

This digital permitting system is part of the City’s broader strategy to modernise informal trading management, enhance accountability, and support small businesses in the Inner City and across Johannesburg’s local markets.

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Issued by the City of Johannesburg

For all media queries, send an email to mediaqueries@joburg.org.za