



CHAMBER OF MINES
of South Africa

MEDIA STATEMENT

For immediate release

CHAMBER OF MINES HOSTS THE LAUNCH OF THE URBAN AGRICULTURE INITIATIVE

Working with stakeholders to find innovative food security and employment solutions

Johannesburg, 11 October 2017: The Chamber of Mines today hosted the launch of the Urban Agriculture Initiative in the Johannesburg inner city. The aim of this initiative is to create a vibrant urban agricultural ecosystem by innovatively repurposing disused rooftops and making use of hydroponics and aquaponics to produce agricultural produce for Johannesburg's inner city communities. This initiative was established by the Johannesburg Inner City Partnership.

As a key stakeholder in the Johannesburg Inner City Partnership the Chamber is participating in and has funded a pilot project to assess the feasibility of growing herbs and vegetables on the rooftops of inner city buildings including and near the Chamber. The first crop was planted on the rooftop of the Chamber building for the benefit of an agripreneur. Should the pilot project be successful, it will be rolled out to other sites resulting in sustainable employment for other agripreneurs.

Although still in its early days, a successful basil crop has been harvested and sold!



Caption: First basil crop grown on the rooftop of the Chamber of Mines building.



Johannesburg is one of many cities in the world turning to inner city farming with the objective of addressing high unemployment and food insecurity, while aiming to regenerate neighbourhoods at the same time.

A sustainable project of this nature has the potential to provide inner city communities with access to cost-effective and healthy food while providing gainful employment to urban agripreneurs.

The use of hydroponics and aquaponics means that crops will be grown in special water solutions without the need for soil or large open spaces. In fact, only a very small area is required to produce a sustainable crop. This approach also significantly reduces water consumption given that 95% of the water used is circulated and therefore reused. Production can be increased by extending the gardens upward, and soil erosion and pest control issues are completely eliminated. Hydroponic plants also mature much faster than crops in other mediums, resulting in a faster turnaround.

The Chamber hopes that this project will provide a useful impetus to this new take on urban agriculture and will extend beyond rooftops to sidewalks and even to other under-utilised spaces for the benefit of the people of Johannesburg's inner city and beyond.

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