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Attention: Business Editors; Education and Training Editors; Labour Editors

For immediate release:

Team SA --- ready to battle it out at the WorldSkills Competition

The WorldSkills London 2011 competition promises to be exhilarating and elating as the world's best compete for top honours in their chosen trades.

More than 150 000 visitors are expected to attend the event, which will see about 1 000 artisans from 50 countries compete against each other. South Africa, which is ranked 47 out of the 54 participating countries, is sending seven participants. The competition will be held over four days at the ExCel London exhibition in the United Kingdom from 5-8 October 2011.

WorldSkills is open to agencies or bodies promoting vocational education and training in their respective countries/regions. It provides a unique means of exchange and comparison of world-class competency standards in industrial trades and service sectors of the global economy.

Asked about the benefits of participating in the competition, the Technical Delegate for South Africa, Mr Andre Vermeulen says it allows for the benchmarking of skills taught in each country/region against the highest levels in 45 skills areas. Young skilled professionals in member countries/regions are able to test their "real world" skills against the most highly skilled competitors in the world.

Mr Vermeulen comments that the London competition will see the return of SA's participation in Automobile Technology and Auto-Body Repair, with both an expert and competitor since 1999, while in car painting only an expert will participate.

Head Office Address:

3RD FLOOR, METROPOLITAN PARK, 8 HILLSIDE ROAD, PARKTOWN / P O BOX 61826, MARSHALLTOWN, 2107
National Call Centre No: 0861 637 738 / Head Office Switchboard No: 011 551 5202
merSETA Website: www.merseta.org.za



“This competition will be an exploratory one for these three skills so that we can touch base with the latest technologies, techniques, processes and assessment procedures internationally in preparation for the 2013 competition.

“As for Mechatronics; Mobile Robotics; Refrigeration & Welding, this will be a third attempt to improve on the results achieved in previous competitions. An enormous effort at great cost due to geographical logistics has gone into the training of competitors. It is now up to them to achieve the best results they can.”

Enthusiastic about the competition, the 2010 Young Welder of the Year competition winner, Chris Van Zijl, will represent South Africa at the 41st WorldSkills Competition and says it is a great honour for him to represent the country.

“It is a very big break for me and I am privilege to represent my country. I am going out there to give my best and I’ll take this experience and plough back to my community. The competition has helped to raise my profile locally and now I am going to compete with the world’s best. I see this as a vote of confidence in my talents and abilities.”

Issued by: Sibongiseni Ziinjiva Ka-Mnguni; Communications Coordinator
merSETA House, 95 7th Avenue, Cnr Rustenburg Road, Melville,
Johannesburg

Tel: 010 219 3000 Fax: 086 673 0004

E-mail: smnguni@merseta.org.za

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