

Advertorial

## Samaf Talking to the People Road Show

If the interest shown during the visit by officials of the South African Micro-Finance Apex Fund (Samaf) at Mutale is anything to go by, many of the rural poor will soon be kissing poverty and unemployment goodbye.

This was evidenced by the high attendance and level of participation by those who attended the *Samaf Talking to the People Road Show*. The road show forms part of their outreach programme where they enlighten communities about services offered by Samaf and how to organize themselves in order to access government funding.

The function was held at the Tshilamba Town Hall. Those who attended got the chance to network, listen to success stories and ask whatever questions they had.

Samaf is a government initiative under the Department of Trade and Industry. It aims to contribute to poverty alleviation by acting as a catalyst for the development of an effective micro-finance sector through support in establishing sustainable micro-finance institutions that could reach deeper and broader to the masses of the poor in the country, facilitating the establishment of an enabling environment for effective financial intermediation and creation of working markets for the enterprising poor and also by building a strong, effective and efficient apex fund.

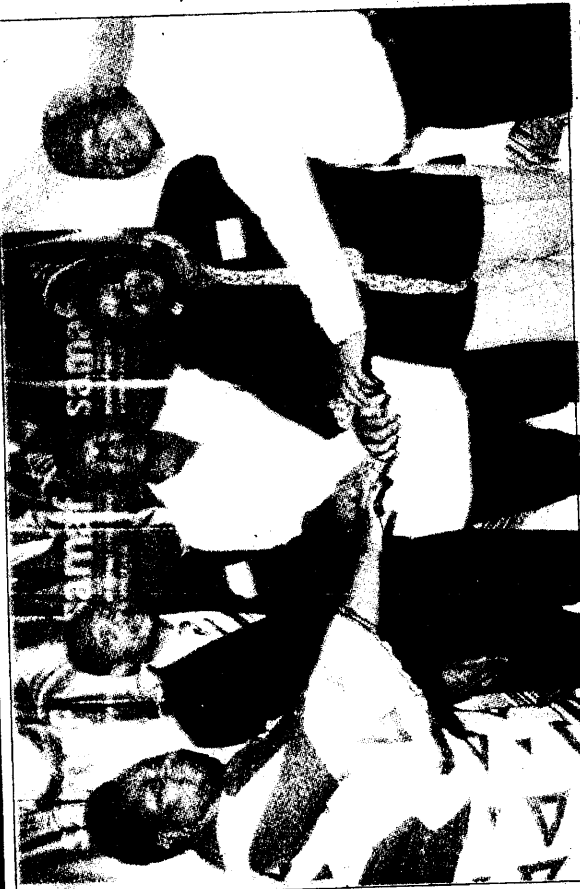
Samaf strives to be a leader in the field of developmental micro finance in the country and facilitate the adoption of best practice models. It envisions

change their lives for the better. "The encouraging success stories you heard are a testimony that it is possible to make it, even if you are located in the rural areas. Let us work together and we can fight poverty and improve people's lives," he said.

The acting executive mayor for Vhembe, Cllr Phillip Phaswana, said the communities of Vhembe were very fortunate to be given the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity of receiving free information to riches and improving their lives. He said the people of Vhembe have been deprived of information for a long time and this has left them poor even though there were funds that could improve their lives. He said the rural communities have been exposed to unscrupulous and heartless money/lenders who strip them of their hard-earned cash with false promises of a better life. "This is the opportunity all have been waiting for; grab it with both hands and lives could change for the better," he said.

Several members of established cooperatives had the chance to share their experiences and their successes with others. Laurence Makgaretsa from Ha Mathabatha, a shopkeeper, said he was down and out before he joined Mathabatha Financial Services Cooperative. "I did not have stock and my business was on the verge of collapse, but today I can proudly say that I am thriving as I am selling cement and making a killing out of it," he said.

Makgaretsa urged others to group themselves and form their own financial services cooperatives.



Joining hands in the fight against poverty and unemployment are, from left, the Speaker of the Mutale Municipality, Ms Maria Mamedzi, Samaf CEO Mr Sitembele Mase, Mutale Mayor Cllr Lucas Manyuha, the acting executive mayor of Vhembe, Cllr Phillip Phaswana, and Natcoc Vhembe's Nathaniel Mudau.



Listening to people speak ... From left to right are the mayor of Mutale, Cllr Lucas Manyuha, Damaf CEO Mr Sitembele Mase and Cllr Phillip Phaswana, acting executive Mayor for Vhembe, listening attentively to community members making inputs.