Cannabis Crisis Coalition

BRIEFING AND ADVICE NOTE · MINISTER OF SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

TO	**Ms Stella Ndabeni MP, Minister of Small Business Development**
ATTENTION	**Office of the Minister of Small Business Development, Mr Siphe Macanda,** Head of Communications, **Mr Lungi Mzizana,** Acting Chief of Staff
FROM	Cannabis Crisis Coalition
DATE	17 November 2026

Make sure small and traditional growers are in the cannabis economy from day one

Dear Minister Ndabeni,

THE BOTTOM LINE

The Cannabis Crisis Coalition (CCC) has written an open letter to the President and seven Ministers, signed by 1,133 organisations and individuals, including patients, doctors, pharmacists, growers, manufacturers and businesses. We are sending it to your office in advance so that you are ready for media questions and can respond with a plan, not a holding line.

Cannabis is one of the few sectors where rural and township entrepreneurs already have the skills, land and product. **Without a deliberate small-business pathway, a formal market will be captured by large operators** while traditional growers remain criminalised.

The CCC has five priority asks of government, set out below. Your Ministry does not lead any of them, but several depend on its support.

We have asked the President to **convene a Presidential Round Table bringing the CCC together with all seven responsible Ministers and SAHPRA** to deliver the five priorities on one time-bound plan. We ask you to support that request and to attend in person.

The situation

- **Excluded by design.** Traditional growers, small enterprises and emerging businesses have no affordable entry point. Existing medical licences require major capital investment before approval.
- **Operating in a grey zone.** Thousands of small outlets and growers want to comply but have no lawful route to do so.

- **Policy is being written now.** The DTIC Commercialisation Policy and Overarching Cannabis Bill will decide who can participate.

The CCC's five priorities

All five priorities need political leadership to happen on time. The ones your Ministry leads are highlighted.

1	**Lift the ban on Section 21** Instruct the Department of Health and SAHPRA to lift the ban on Section 21 approvals that is blocking doctors from treating patients with serious medical conditions. Patients are already running out of medicines. **LEAD** Health and SAHPRA **TIMEFRAME** Immediately
2	**Finalise the Cannabis for Private Purposes Act** Urgently finalise the regulations so that the Act can come into force. **LEAD** Justice and Constitutional Development **TIMEFRAME** Date committed by 11 December 2026; in force by end of February 2027
3	**Remove cannabis from the Drugs and Drug Trafficking Act** Take cannabis out of the Act, so that it is governed by its own laws for private use, medicine and commerce. **LEAD** Justice and Constitutional Development **TIMEFRAME** Date committed by 11 December 2026; in force by the end of the first quarter of 2027
4	**Establish a register for South African medicinal cannabis** Instruct SAHPRA to establish a register for quality-assured medicinal cannabis that is GMP-manufactured in South Africa, so that Section 21 is no longer the only route for patients. **LEAD** Health and SAHPRA **TIMEFRAME** Approach agreed at the Round Table; draft for comment by mid-2027
5	**End cannabis arrests** Issue a national SAPS directive placing a moratorium on arrests for the private use, possession and cultivation of cannabis, in line with the 2018 Constitutional Court judgment, until the Cannabis for Private Purposes Act is in force. **LEAD** Police, with Justice and the NPA **TIMEFRAME** Directive issued before the December shutdown

What we are asking your Ministry to do

1. **Support a Presidency-convened Round Table and attend in person,** bringing proposals for a small-grower licence tier and SEDFA support.

   TIMEFRAME **Advisers and officials meet before the December shutdown; ministerial Round Table before the State of the Nation Address in February 2027**

2. **Champion an affordable micro and small licence tier** with simplified compliance in the Commercialisation Policy, consistent with your Red-Tape Reduction Framework and the Business Licensing Bill.

   TIMEFRAME **Proposals tabled at the Round Table, February 2027**

3. **Open SEDFA finance and business development support** to hemp and cannabis enterprises and cooperatives.

   TIMEFRAME **Eligibility confirmed by mid-2027**

What is at stake for South Africa

The National Cannabis Master Plan values the sector at around **R28 billion**, with **10,000 to 25,000 jobs** across the value chain. Today the formal market generates only about R5.5 billion a year; roughly half of all activity is illicit and pays no tax. Most of those jobs would be in rural areas with the highest unemployment, and the Master Plan prioritises cultivation zones where poverty is greatest.

Considerations for your office

- **Inclusion and transformation.** A small-grower pathway turns a crisis story into one about township and rural enterprise.
- **Shapes the outcome early.** Small business needs to be at the table before licensing rules are fixed.

Next step

We ask for a meeting with you or senior officials and a written response within 14 working days of publication of the open letter, confirming your support for the Round Table and setting out your department's timetable. The CCC can brief your advisers this week.

Yours sincerely,

The Cannabis Crisis Coalition

On behalf of the 1,133 organisations and individuals who signed the open letter