



women, youth &
persons with disabilities

Department:
Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



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**REMARKS BY MME MAITE NKOANA-MASHABANE,
MINISTER IN THE PRESIDENCY FOR WOMEN, YOUTH
AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES DURING THE
MINISTERIAL BRIEFING SESSION OF THE NCOP ON
“YOUTH POVERTY AND UNEMPLOYMENT”**

TUESDAY, 24 AUGUST 2021

Hon. Mr Amos Masondo, Chairperson of the National
Council of Provinces,
Hon. Ms Sylvia Lucas, Deputy Chairperson of the National
Council of Provinces,
Hon. Mr Jomo Nyambi, House Chairperson for Committees
and Oversight,
Hon. Mr Seiso Mohai, Chief Whip of the National Council of
Provinces,
Hon. MsThoko Didiza, Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform
and Rural Development,
Hon. Mr Thulas Nxesi, Minister of Employment and Labour,
Hon. Members of Parliament,
Hon. Premiers of our provinces,
Ladies and Gentlemen

I am pleased participate in this important briefing session organised by the National Council Provinces (NCOP) on an important issues affecting our country.

Following the democratic elections in 1994, June 16 became a day in which we honour the courage, bravery and sacrifice of the young heroes and heroines who were at the forefront of our struggle.

We remember young people such as Hector Pieteron, Mbuyisa Makhubo, Tsietsi Mashinini, Winnie Madikizela Mandela and many others. We remember their resilience and their determination to fight for liberation.

As I look around the country today, I am encouraged to see the faces of young people who are hard at work building their own lives and contributing to a better country for us all.

At the same time, I am reminded of the singular challenge that youth unemployment presents for young people across South Africa, and indeed for each and every one of us.

Even before the coronavirus pandemic, youth unemployment was a growing and urgent crisis.

Now, in the aftermath of the devastating economic impact of the pandemic, unemployment is even higher than before. 63%, or almost two-thirds, of young South Africans are unemployed.

Behind this statistic, there are millions of young people looking for a way to support themselves and their families, to forge a path into the economy, and to contribute to their communities and their society.

I understand the indignity and suffering that this causes.

I understand the pain and disillusionment of many young people who wake up each morning not knowing where to go.

It is for these young people that we must work every day, with renewed urgency, and with all of our resources, to build a better future.

It is also an opportunity to share with this august house the interventions and programme of our Department to address youth poverty and unemployment.

At the outset, I wish to indicate that the issue of unemployment that is currently facing our youth is structural, endemic and has a myriad of root causes.

Despite our massive investments into education, of the 1million young children who start school every year only five hundred thousand (500, 000) sit for their matric exams and the majority of the young people who are unemployed are those without a matric certificate.

Only one in two of our NSFAS funded students graduates from institutions of Higher Learning creating broken pathways and dejected young people locked out of the labour market.

Undoubtedly, youth unemployment is a national crisis that demands urgent, innovative and coordinated solutions to deal with root the causes such as low economic growth; low aggregate demand for labour; and skills mismatch.

The intervention that our Government have adopted in response to youth poverty and unemployment are informed by the National Development Plan (NDP). The NDP takes a futuristic perspective in its approach.

It outlines our envisaged development trajectory in the journey towards 2030. It singles out the youth as the major catalysts in boosting economic growth. It puts youth empowerment at the epicentre of development strategies. The youth are therefore at the core of South Africa's development agenda.

Programme Director,

His Excellency, President Cyril Ramaphosa has committed to addressing youth unemployment crisis, one of his foremost priorities of the 6th Administration.

In this context, as Government we have recognised that the growing youth population should not become our greatest source of potential instead of a threat due to the challenges confronting young people.

Accordingly, young people hold the key to transforming our economy, boosting growth and fostering creativity and innovation. They are essential to increasing productivity and improving the livelihoods of all South Africans.

As the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, we are working together with the Project Management Office (PMO) in the Office of the President to

coordinate and drive an integrated plan to create two million new jobs for young people during the next decade, over and above average job growth.

Our Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities has launched the National Youth Policy 2030 on the 05th of March 2021.

The policy advocates for youth development mainstreaming. It proposes policy provisions to tackle long term structural and systematic unemployment of young people.

It also advocates for key interventions to promote quality education and enhance skills for youth; deal with the negative health outcomes; promote social cohesion and nation building; and creates a capable youth sector by strengthening entities and organisations that deliver youth programmes.

The Department also supports the implementation of the Presidential Youth Employment Intervention.

In this regard, the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) which is an entity under our Department is a key delivery partner to the Presidential Youth Employment Intervention.

Due to the complexity of our unemployment crisis, other important programmes are necessary as part of a multidimensional programme to address unemployment and poverty.

Working in partnership with the Department, the NYDA has over the period 1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021 made the achievements in the following areas:

- The 1000 youth owned enterprises in 100 days' program in collaboration with the Presidency and the Department of Small Business Development have been completed, despite the challenges imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic. This program created 3 000 new jobs in the economy.
- Supported 1,200 youth micro enterprises through the Youth Micro Enterprise Relief Fund. This program saved approximately 2 400 micro and small business jobs.
- Provided close to 20 000 young people received business management, training, work readiness training and life skills training in person and online.

- Placed 6 000 young people in job opportunities.
- The Integrated Youth Development Strategy to give effect to implementation of the National Youth Policy and National Development Plan 2030 has been developed.

Honourable Members,

The NYDA has also supported the Presidential Employment Stimulus which encompasses the Presidential Youth Employment Intervention.

This includes the 320 000 young people, 65% of them young women, who have been placed as education assistants and general assistants earning the National Minimum Wage in 26,000 public schools.

This is now the largest public employment programme in South Africa, and the fastest to reach such a large scale.

The Department of Trade Industry and Competition supported over 10,000 jobs through the expansion of the Global Business Services incentive, with most of these jobs going to youth.

The Department of Public Works appointed 1,800 young people in various programmes, including the Welisizwe Rural Bridges Programme.

The Youth Employment Service (YES), together with its corporate partners, is continuing to create work experiences for young black South Africans. It has created 55,000 work experiences to date, injecting R3.1 billion back into the economy directly through youth salaries.

The NYDA has applied for additional funding for the 2021 / 2022 financial year through Phase 2 of the Employment Stimulus for its Youth Entrepreneurship Program and for the revitalisation of the National Youth Service.

Revitalising the National Youth Service will create 30 000 opportunities for young people to meaningfully contribute to their communities, develop critical skills required to participate effectively in the economy, build confidence and expand their networks and social capital.

As the Minister responsible for the NYDA, I will ensure the finds are utilised effectively and accounted for.

A Presidential Youth Service programme will channel young people's energy into advancing social cohesion, nation building and development.

Our commitment to you today is that we will place young people at the centre of our economic recovery efforts, and that we will do everything in our power to support young people on your journeys.

We will meet the challenge of youth unemployment with solutions and impact at scale. By developing strong partnerships within government and across society, by working together towards this shared objective, we will work towards a society in which every young person indeed has a place to go.

Programme Director,

In conclusion, let me emphasise that, we need to continue investing in our young people as a country. Investment in youth means that government, private sector and all civil society collaboratively ought to ensure that we reap the rewards which the demographic dividend promises.

Without these investments, the current youth cohort risks being excluded from meaningful participation in the economy.

This, also threatens the stability of the country. We are taking steps to ensure that all levels of the state across the three spheres, play a role in making youth development a key part of the projects and programmes.

They are all expected to implement and then be accountable through reporting against the Integrated Youth Development Strategy and the Monitoring and Evaluation framework.

It is all of our interests to reduce youth unemployment and poverty. The rewards that will accrue for our country and her people are worth it.

In line with the National Youth Policy 2030 theme, this decade must be one in which we accelerate the achievement of positive youth development outcomes.

I Thank You!