



Input by the Free State Premier, Hon. Sefora Ntombela during the occasion of the Ministerial Briefing on Youth Poverty and unemployment

The Honourable Chairperson of the NCOP, Hon. Mr NA Masondo

The Honorable Ministers

The Honorable Premiers present

Members of the Media

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is both an honour and pleasure to address you on this important issue in our country, the advancement of our collective interventions to address youth unemployment and poverty.

Perhaps more than at any given time in history, the youth of the Free State deserve a responsive government that is agile and full uncompromising on implementation.

We are here to account to our people on the progress we have made this far in our quest to defeat the scourge of unemployment and poverty amongst our youth.

In the period 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2021, we spent R35,2 billion on various youth focused programmes; 7% of this was directly on youth owned companies. This translates to about to 2,4 billion of past six years. While this may be

commendable, we are under illusion of the big task at hand. Must more still needs to be done to empower young people in the province.

Chairperson, we are joining this session live from the Mangaung SMME Hub located in Bloemfontein. This beautiful intervention was initiated by the Department of Economic Affairs, Small Business, Tourism and Environmental Affairs. The SMME Hub houses a total of 35 SMMEs where; 15 are youth owned. These are businesses range from manufacturing, bakeries, restaurants, salons and Information and Technology (IT) companies.

The hub has created a total number of 110 employment opportunities for young people, with a total spent of R6 million rand on rental and equipment for the businesses.

One of the brilliant companies that operation from this facility, is Eagle Fleet. A founded led by two young people, which tracks vehicles and other assets for various entities. This youth owned company has accomplished the following:

Employment Created	Current Contracts	Amount Spent
Three permanent jobs have been created.	The business currently has contracts with Sassa, Khuwait construction, EKS tracking, Government fleet department and Hestony trucking company.	This youth owned business was supported with an amount of one million seven hundred thousand rand (R1 700 000)

Insofar as the SOPA Injunctions relating to youth empowerment, we have achieved the following:

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF INJUNCTION/ PROJECT/ PROGRAMME	OUTCOME	AMOUNT
We committed to provide financial support for youth owned SMME's	To date 227 Youth owned SMME's have benefitted	We have supported these youth owned SMMEs with six hundred and seventy thousand rand from the enterprise support incentive and 6.6 million rand from risk sharing incentive
We have assisted 25 youth owned construction companies through the Contractor Development Programme (CDP) over the current MTEF period.	A total of one thousand five hundred and sixty (1 560) employment opportunities were created in the past two financial years with one thousand three hundred and an additional twenty (1320) employment opportunities for the current financial year.	An amount of R106 million was spent in the past two financial years with an additional R131 million set aside for the current financial year.
We are pleased to be joined by Ms. M. Motsoane from Botshabelo in Mangaung who is one of the female contractors, whose company has been allocated a three million Rand project called Thaba-Nchu public road, she will create 36 jobs for the youth.		
Under the National Youth Service Programme	Seven hundred and thirty-two youth (732) are currently benefitting from the Building and Civil Construction, and Environmental Practices skills development programme under the innovation and empowerment programme of the National Youth Service	

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In our Township Revitalization Programme (TRP)	The project has supported 144 young people in the province in the current financial year	We have spent about 47 million rand in this project
In responding to the unique challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic in our schools, nineteen thousand and eighty seven young people (19 087) were appointed by the Department of Education to assist in our schools as Education & General School Assistants		The provincial expenditure for this program was four hundred and eleven million rand (R407m) Of the total number, twelve thousand five hundred and fifty-two (12 052) are young women whilst thirty are people living with disabilities
		Four hundred and twenty (420) employment opportunities for young people were created by the Department of Education through the construction of new schools, additional facilities, refurbishments, and renovations to hostels as well as eradication of pit latrines at our schools.
Our commitment and focus on investing in the skills development in our province is well documented.	We have allocated the following number of bursaries in various critical skills we need in our province: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have a total of one thousand five hundred and forty (1 540) students studying in various South African Universities at a cost of two hundred and seventy-one million rand • Whilst we also have five hundred and nine (509) students studying in various countries such as 	

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	<p>Turkey, China and Cuba to make mention of a few at a cost of 107 million rand</p> <p>Currently, there are three hundred and twenty-six young people registered at the Glen Agricultural College.</p>	
<p>237 Unemployed Graduates will be absorbed by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development.</p>	<p>The first intake of 117 graduates completed October/November 2020. The recruitment process for the second intake of 120 graduates will be finalised by October 2021.</p>	
<p>We have with us Mr Lesego Dikoko, an international scholarship recipient representing Kgato mushroom project, conceptualised by Mr LP Dikoko and Mr T Selepe whom were international scholarship recipients of the Free State provincial government to study Masters Degrees in Microbiology from Fujian Agriculture and Forestry University in China. Upon returning to the country in 2019, the two graduates started a Mushroom production factory in the small farming town, Paul Roux in the Free State. The department injected R500 000 into the Project.</p> <p>The project has employed 6 permanent unemployed graduates (3 Scientists, 2 Finance and 1 Marketing graduates) and 5 part-time unemployed youth in the Paul Roux farm district.</p> <p>Upon the completion of the project, it is expected that the factory will employ about 40 to 50 youth permanently.</p>		
<p>We have realised that the psycho-social impact of COVID-19 is a serious concern amongst our people</p>	<p>It is for this reason that we have Ninety two COVID-19 social workers who are providing psycho-social support related to COVID-19 who have been appointed with a</p>	<p>The total expenditure over 12 months period is six million six hundred and twenty four thousands rand</p>

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	stipend of six thousand Rand per month	
We have committed ourselves to prioritise issues of disability	The department of Social Development has employed 110 youth with disabilities to date	We are today proud to be joined by the two brilliant young ladies with disabilities, Ms. Ayanda Hoho who is currently employed as a social worker and Ms. Lebogang Kokong who is in administration
100 young people have been Appointed as National School Nutrition Programme Assistants at the National Schools Nutrition Programme Head Office.		
We have appointed one thousand two hundred and thirty six young people as Food Handlers in Quantile 1-3 schools		
The Department of Sport, Arts, Culture and Recreation has disbursed the COVID-19 Relief Fund to young artists totalling nine hundred and eighty-seven at a cost of 5.5 million rand.		
Broadband has been rolled out to the 185 libraries allowing for Free Wi-Fi at 155 of these libraries and the remaining 30 will be connected by the end of this financial year	About 11 million Rand investment in this project was made available for this purpose.	

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<p>We have taken a conscious decision to invest in youth companies within the agricultural sector.</p> <p>Out of the 25 agricultural projects implemented with CASP funding this year, 3 (12%) are 100% youth projects that will be implemented in the following areas:</p> <p>Mangaung Metro:</p> <p>(1) Fodder production – Wepener – 4 youth (2 Female and 2 Male) – R2.5 million</p> <p>Lejweleputswa:</p> <p>(1) Red Meat - Brandfort – 1 female youth – R2.5 million</p> <p>(1) Poultry – Boshoff – 1 female youth – R3.5 million</p> <p>11 jobs were secured with this support</p>	<p>The total investment for this project is eight million five hundred thousand Rand (R 8.5 million)</p>	
<p>On top of these 7 youth projects will be assisted with planning to prepare their projects for implementation during the following financial years. Kgato mushroom project also present</p>	<p>The total investment for this support is R1, 85 million</p>	

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here today is an example of a youth project supported with this planning budget.		
Through the YAFF programme and competition, the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development supported 7 projects from Xhariep, Thabo Mofutsanyana, Lejweleputswa and Fezile Dabi during 2020/21 with a total of R1,7 million. 13 jobs were created with this support and these projects were also supported with technical advice and market linkages. We are joined today by Mr. Tshotleho Malgas from Edenburg, Xhariep, an owner and beneficiary of one of the 7 projects that was supported with R254 000-00.	<p>The following support was provided with the value of two hundred and fifty-four thousand rand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 37 Sheep - 1 Ram - Wool sorting table - Wool bins - Hydraulic wool press - Stand for shearing machine - 2 hand piece clippers - 8 gates for the kraal 	
Assessing the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis on societies, economies and vulnerable groups is fundamental to inform and tailor the responses of governments and partners to recover from the crisis and ensure that no one is left behind in this effort.	The Department of Health has appointed 874 young people for COVID-19 related work in the Department of Health. These appointments include IT specialists, Bio Medical Engineer; Cleaners; Clerks; Environmental Practitioners; Doctors; Nurses and Pharmacists at a cost of close to R20 million rand	

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<p>As part of our provincial migration program into the Fourth industrial Revolution, we have embarked on the following interventions</p>	<p>We have invested R5 million into the Central University of Technology (CUT) Innovation hub where the primary recipients will be young people that will do create products using Artificial Intelligence; Robotics; Cloud Computing and Big Data. Thus far 16 young people have directly benefitted from this initiative</p> <p>In partnership with SEDA, we have established a state-of-the-art Digital Hub in Botshabelo. This is a multi-stakeholder incubator for ICT/Tech SMMEs with special focus on the youth.</p> <p>We recognise the need to modernise the Free State Economy. This this extend, we have completed the Free State Digital Economy Master Plan.</p>	
<p>The Extended Public Works programme (EPWP) is a skills training and development intervention that provides construction, environment-related and life skills training, access to practical work experience and mentoring to the participants.</p>	<p>Through the Expanded Public Works Programme, we have so far created fourty-one thousand and twelve job opportunities (41 012). Many of the beneficiaries of this Programme are youth, women, and persons with disability.</p>	

Honorable Chairperson, we have taken a conscious decision as the province to ensure that the procurement spend in the province prioritizes companies owned by` the young people.

It is for this reason that a minimum of about 30% of the procurement expenditure in the province is meant to support the youth owned SMME's. Though much still needs to be done in this regard, we are on a right path.

One of our critical infrastructure interventions is the intentional procurement of various construction materials from youth companies. In the Department of Police, Roads and Transport, we spent R26 million rand on this and in the Department of Social Development, 43% of procurement spent on young suppliers amounts to over 9 million Rand.

A process has begun to appoint an inclusive and representative Youth Advisory Team in this current financial year, which will assist Free State Government to achieve the overall objective of youth development, youth participation and youth emancipation in building the Free State that we want. This is our moral obligation.

Honourable Chairperson, our commitment towards youth development remains unwavering, indeed there is still a long way to, but we are committing to stay the cause and ensure that our young people realize the future which they deserve.

I thank you

