

NCOP MINISTERIAL BRIEFING SESSION ON YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT AND POVERTY

“INTERVENTIONS TO ADDRESS YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT AND POVERTY”

DATE: 24 AUGUST 2021

Honourable Chairperson of the NCOP

Honourable Deputy Chairperson

Ministers and Premiers Present

Honourable Members

The invitation of SALGA to participate and address this important session focusing on interventions to address youth unemployment and poverty is truly appreciated. We further appreciate this engagement on this very critical topic on interventions to address youth unemployment and poverty. As the Local Government Sector, we would deem this engagement a success if it paves a way forward to an integrated youth development program that considers the centrality of the sector in addressing the stubborn challenges of youth underdevelopment, unemployment and poverty. At the heart of these challenges is the vulnerability of the youth generations to drug and substance abuse, dropping out of school, depression, crime, child parenting, diseases, sex slavery to mention a few. Solutions to these

problems rest in the responsiveness of the state at a local level. Capacitating municipalities in human and financial resources to attend to youth development holistically is crucial if we are to intervene meaningfully. The District Development Model provides a real potential for such resourcing if all the youth development programs are coordinated at this level, pulling together all available resources and involve government and the private sector. Accountability measures at this level for all sectors for the programs be brought into the space, the impact of programs like EPWP, CWP, NARISSEC, Youth in the environment, youth in waste management, etc., should be skilling of young people as practitioners in these areas, forming youth cooperatives and business ventures that would do business with government to provide these services.

Municipalities have an important role to play in implementing the National Youth Policy 2020-2030, which aims to empower young people with knowledge, skills, and opportunities. Key to this is involvement of the youth in all Local Government planning processes and mainstream youth participation and development in the implementation of plans. Involving young people in various local government projects is crucial to developing civic-minded citizens and responsible, informed leaders. Municipalities implement projects in the field of civic education, sports and culture, awareness on HIV/AIDS and drug abuse, prevention of teenage pregnancy and other social challenges, as well as human rights issues. With some exceptions these projects tend to be more organised in a short term, events- based- manner. Sustainability of the programs is affected by lack of resources as alluded at the beginning.

Municipalities across the country are giving priority to the integration of youth issues into their council programmes. As a result, youth development projects/programmes are being incorporated into Integrated Development plans (IDP) and service delivery and budget implementation plans(SDBIPS). Youth structures within municipalities such as Youth Development Units (YDU) or Special Programs Units (SPU) are there to coordinate, facilitate, advise and monitor the mainstreaming of youth development policies and programmes for municipalities. These youth units, together with youth forums in ward committees and youth

councils maintain young people's formal participation in decision making processes at the local level.

These units enhance the participation of young people through targeted programmes initiated by government, business and civil society, as well as support for programmes that encourage youth innovation, entrepreneurship development, skills development, including income generating and wealth-creating activities. One standard youth programme which is implemented in some Metros is the establishment of called Youth Advisory Centres (YACs). The YACs are based in disadvantaged areas of the City and are normally centrally located in previously disadvantaged areas for ease of access for the youth in those areas. The SPUs Youth Development Units at administrative level, led by their Portfolio Councillor heading these divisions, are members of SALGA Governance structure called Community Development in all 9 provinces and use the platform for learning and policy development support to align their initiatives to the National legislation, and keep abreast on youth development issues.

The National Youth Policy (NYP) 2030 was developed and approved by the Cabinet in October 2020 and was launched in March 2021. Its vision is: "Integrated, holistic and sustainable youth development in which young people not only realize their full potential in the social, economic and political spheres of life, but also their responsibilities in making a meaningful contribution towards building a better life for all.

The Integrated Youth Development Strategy (IYDS 2020) developed by the National Youth Development Agency provides guidance on the implementation roles and responsibilities of the National Youth Policy 2020-2030. SALGA has been leading the process that enables municipalities to develop their own IYDS.

The National Development Plan (2012) provides an aspirational vision for South Africa that shall be achieved by 2030. The plan highlights the full utilization of the opportunities stemming from a largely youthful society. It envisions a youth population that is economically active, socially integrated and contributes to the country's development process through active citizenship.

With all these good intentions, implementation on the ground remains inconsistent and frustrating to the youth. Honourable members, in order to realise the dream of eliminating poverty and unemployment in youth: education, skills development, youth at the forefront of service delivery programs and entrepreneurship remain the cornerstones of youth development. The National Youth Development Agency, as a driver of the National Youth Policy and strategy is not accessible to many areas and some of its programs tend to be centralised in big cities at the expense of peripheral and rural areas. The South African Youth Council, which is a vehicle for youth coordination in wards, local municipalities, districts and metros, linking with the Provincial and National structures of SAYC, tend to be embroiled in politics and the election thereof become partisan, with resultant challenges associated with addressing youth problems.

We need to respond collectively to the socio-economic conditions which affect our sector. Let us join hands and resources to leave a legacy worth remembering to our youth population. Our municipalities across the country are implementing such inspiring innovations and solutions, including bursary schemes, that as SALGA we are coordinating webinars for learning and sharing of experiences in the sector.

Thank you Honourable Chairperson.

Cllr Sidell

Chairperson for Working Group on Community Development and Social Cohesion