



CLOSING REMARKS BY THE EXECUTIVE CHAIRPERSON OF THE NYDA ON THE OCCASION OF THE STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION

17 September 2025

Executive Deputy Chairperson

CEO

Executive Management

Colleagues,

As we close, I am reminded of the words ANC stalwart, Walter Sisulu when he stated, “*The future belongs to those who prepare for it today.*” Colleagues there aren’t enough words to express how proud I am of the work we have done in the last three days, and I have no doubt that the future of South Africa is in capable hands.

DC allow me to take a moment to reflect on some the work we have done here and the road that lies ahead for the NYDA. This gathering has reminded us of both the weight of our mandate and the immense opportunity before us to shape the future of our country by empowering young people to take their rightful place in society and in the economy.

Our deliberations have been anchored in the broader vision of the National Development Plan 2030 (NDP), which remains the central blueprint for South Africa’s developmental trajectory. As we move through the current Medium-Term Strategic Framework (MTF), we must ensure that our programmes, initiatives, and interventions are not just responsive to the immediate needs of young people but also aligned with the long-term vision of creating an inclusive, dynamic, and sustainable society by 2030. The NDP compels us to think boldly, to act with urgency, and to constantly align our strategies to the larger national development agenda.

Colleagues, as correctly stated this means we must align our vision and strategy across all key dimensions of the Agency: our internal processes, our approach to learning and development, the youth customer journey through our brand and corporate identity, and the



stewardship of our financial resources. These are not silos, but interdependent levers that, if managed holistically, will allow us to build an Agency that is not only credible but impactful at scale.

At the heart of this, we must evolve into what the CEO correctly termed an intelligent youth agency. An agency that is self-aware—conscious of both its strengths and weaknesses. An agency that is efficient — deploying its human and financial resources in a manner that is strategic and not wasteful. An agency that is innovative, constantly searching for new ways to serve young people. And an agency that is data-centric, using evidence to inform decisions and measure progress.

In this regard, we must sharpen our ability to leverage data not just for our own internal performance, but for the benefit of our stakeholders across government, civil society, and the private sector. If we are truly to mainstream youth development, then the insights we generate through our research and programmes must become the resource that others can use to design policies, partnerships, and initiatives. Data must become one of the most valuable contributions the NYDA makes to the national development ecosystem.

One of the most urgent issues confronting us as a country—and as an Agency—is the scourge of gender-based violence (GBV). This is not a peripheral issue, nor one that can be addressed as an afterthought in our plans. GBV is a crisis that cuts to the heart of our humanity and undermines the potential of millions of young women. It is no coincidence that young women are among the most vulnerable members of our society, often facing systemic inequalities that make them targets of violence. If we are to be serious about youth development, we must also be serious about protecting young women and ensuring that our programmes directly respond to GBV—through prevention, support, and empowerment, and these are all already available within the Agency we just need to be deliberate in message and action. This is not only a moral imperative; it is a developmental necessity.

Equally, as we speak about inclusivity, we must do so with sincerity and conviction. The NYDA must be an institution that represents all young people—without exception. This means ensuring that our programmes, our language, and our strategies reflect the lived experiences of every young South African, including those in the LGBTQIA+ community. True inclusivity



means recognising diversity not as a challenge, but as a strength. If our democracy is to deepen and thrive, no young person must ever feel invisible in the work of the NYDA.

Furthermore, we must also think globally. The challenges we face in South Africa are deeply connected to global currents—whether it is the shifting landscape of international trade, the fallout of global trade wars, or the disruptions of technological change. These developments affect economies across the world, and by extension, they affect the prospects of our young people. As the NYDA, we must develop the capacity to anticipate these global shifts, to interpret their implications for South Africa, and to equip our youth to thrive in an interconnected world. To remain insular would be to do a disservice to our mandate.

Colleagues, as a Board, we must also move with speed and decisiveness. Youth unemployment cannot wait. Our governance must reflect urgency and accountability. This means ensuring training for board members, the signing of performance agreements for non-executive board members and upholding the highest standards of transparency and accountability. Governance is not only about compliance—it is about setting the tone for performance and ensuring that the NYDA is trusted to deliver.

Central to all of this is the need for our work to be research-based, evidence-driven, and grounded in knowledge. Programmes that are based only on intuition or good intentions may have symbolic value, but they will not have sustainable impact. Every initiative we undertake must be backed by rigorous research, by credible data, and by a deep understanding of the complex realities facing young people.

Colleagues, our responsibility is not light. But it is also not insurmountable. We are tasked with building an NYDA that is credible, inclusive, forward-looking, and impactful. This requires vision, courage, and unwavering commitment. As we leave this strategic planning session, let us do so with the resolve to translate the insights we have shared into concrete action. Let us remain guided by the NDP, unwavering in our fight against GBV, uncompromising in our inclusivity, vigilant of global trends, and steadfast in our commitment to evidence-based work.

If we succeed in this, we will not only build an Agency that young people can trust and believe in; we will also contribute meaningfully to the South Africa of 2030—a South Africa where no young person is left behind.



Thank you.