



**SPEAKING NOTES BY THE EXECUTIVE CHAIRPERSON OF THE NATIONAL YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (NYDA) ON THE OCCASION OF THE GRAND OPENING OF THE PORT SHEPSTONE INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY**

28 October 2025

History is not only written in Parliament or at the Union Buildings. It is also written in places like Port Shepstone when young people rise, learn, and decide that the future will no longer be something that happens to them, but something they actively create.

*Programme Director,*

*Distinguished guests,*

*Esteemed lecturers,*

*Partners and Stakeholders,*

*The community at large,*

*And most importantly intsha yangase Port Shepstone,*

Today marks a historic moment for this region and for the young people of KwaZulu-Natal. The opening of this institute is not just about new buildings or new classrooms. It is about a new imagination of what is possible for young people in rural and semi-urban South Africa.

Programme Director, education remains one of the most powerful instruments of transformation in our country. It is the bridge that connects dreams to opportunities, and poverty to prosperity. But, at NYDA we believe that education must also be relevant. It must speak to the needs of the economy and the aspirations of our people.



However, we remain hopeful because institutions like this one are answering this call by offering accredited qualifications and skills programmes that prepare young people for the modern workforce. Whether it's computer technician training, end-user computing, occupational health and safety, beauty and therapy studies, or pharmacist assistant qualifications, these are not just courses. They are pathways to dignity, independence, and empowerment.

Let's talk about one of the sectors represented at this Institute, the beauty and wellness industry.

This industry, programme director, is a R30 billion industry in South Africa, employing hundreds of thousands of people, mostly women and youth. Across the continent, beauty and wellness are more than just vanity they are about wellness, confidence, and economic empowerment.

When we talk about beauty therapy and aesthetics, we are talking about entrepreneurship, creativity, and global opportunity. From skincare clinics to spa management, from product formulation to digital beauty content creation the market is vast, and young people in this institution can use the skills they develop here to propel to greater heights.

To the young women and men enrolled here: your hands can heal, beautify, and build wealth. The NYDA stands ready to support such ventures with business grants, mentorship, and market linkages.

But we must also lift our eyes to the horizon. The digital economy is reshaping the world. Artificial Intelligence (AI), robotics, coding, data analytics are not buzzwords, they are the new literacy of the 21st century.

The reality is that we are entering an age where jobs are being redefined and new industries are being born. South Africa cannot afford to be a spectator in this revolution. As young people we often state the future is now, the future belongs to those who prepare for it today. That same spirit must be carried when we confront the reality that today we need coders, technicians, AI engineers, but also policy makers, and social scientists who will guide how



technology interacts with humanity. In other words, while the world is fast changing, there is space for everyone, young people must be guided and mentored to make wise decisions for career development.

The message is clear: every young person has a role to play in shaping this digital future. Whether you write the code or regulate the policy you belong in this conversation.

However, this moment requires us to be strategic. We must study the market and align our training with what the economy demands. Unemployment remains our greatest challenge, and the NYDA believes that the answer lies not in producing more graduates but in producing employable and entrepreneurial graduates.

This means enrolling in courses that are responsive to industry needs, technically grounded, and entrepreneurially oriented. The young person who can fix a computer, formulate a product, or design an app is not just looking for a job they are creating one.

As the current NYDA Board, we have made it a priority to focus on rural and marginalised areas like Port Shepstone. Because we know these are the communities that need us most.

As the NYDA we are also working tirelessly to expand our footprint across the country by establishing more offices in every province, district, and municipality to ensure greater visibility and accessibility to our services. The time for transformation is now, not tomorrow, not someday, now. We cannot afford to have young people in rural and township areas feeling unseen or excluded from national development. We recognise that the harsh realities of youth unemployment and poverty are not of their own making; they are structural legacies of inequality and exclusion. Our duty, as the NYDA and as government, is to change that reality to create pathways of opportunity, empowerment, and sustainable livelihoods that allow every young person, regardless of where they come from, to dream boldly and live with dignity.

For too long, development has been uneven. Cities have raced ahead while rural areas have waited for the bus that never comes. That must change. Institutions like yours are living proof that talent is everywhere, even if opportunity is not. And it is our duty, as the NYDA and as



government, to ensure opportunity reaches every corner of this country from Soweto to Port Shepstone.

To the young people of Port Shepstone, please take seriously that the time is now. The future will not wait. Be bold enough to learn, to innovate, and to lead. The NYDA is with you; from funding your ideas to supporting your skills journey. The economy of the future belongs to those who prepare for it today.

And so, as we open the doors of this great institution, let us also open the doors of imagination, courage, and purpose.

Let us build a South Africa where every young person, regardless of geography, gender, or background, can look at their reflection and say with conviction: **“I am ready. I am capable. I am the future.”**

**Thank you!**