



**SPEAKING NOTES BY THE EXECUTIVE CHAIRPERSON OF THE NYDA, DR.
SUNSHINE MYENDE OF THE OCCASION OF NATIONAL YOUTH SERVICE INDABA:
DIGITAL PATHWAYS TO EMPLOYMENT**

30 September 2025

Programme Director, Ms. Hlengiwe Mtetwa

Hon. Minister in Presidency for Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, Hon. Chikunga

DG, Adv. Mikateko Mikateko

Brand SA CEO, Mr. Neville Matjie

Distinguished guests,

Colleagues and stakeholders,

Most importantly, the young people of South Africa,

It is a profound honour for the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) to deliver this message of support today at this National Youth Service Indaba. This gathering is timely, necessary, and deeply aligned with our national vision of tackling youth unemployment through innovation and partnership.

Hon. Minister, you will recall that at the United Nations G20 side event as South Africa we emphasised as the current Presidency our mission is to ensure inclusion and ensure that we grow our economies in a way that leave no-one behind. And today we meet under the theme “*Digital Pathways to Employment*,” which speaks to one of the most urgent priorities of our time: ensuring that the youth of South Africa are not left behind in the fast-changing digital economy. Technology is not just an enabler—it is a driver of growth, a creator of opportunities, and a bridge towards equality.



As today's Indaba seeks to identify skills, employment, and entrepreneurship opportunities for young people within the digital sector. At the NYDA, we view this as a continuation of our mission to empower young people with tools that prepare them for the future of work. By linking youth to digital training and earning opportunities, we are not only addressing immediate unemployment challenges but also laying the foundation for a more inclusive and resilient economy.

Furthermore, we recognise that unemployment is not just a statistic. It is a lived reality for millions of young South Africans whose potential remains untapped. This is why a concrete Implementation Plan, as envisaged by this Indaba, is so important. It signals that we are moving beyond conversation to action—towards clear, measurable steps that will ensure young people access digital skills training, entry-level jobs, internships, and pathways into entrepreneurship.

For the NYDA Board, our mission is clear: to ensure that no young person is left behind. This means ensuring inclusion and access for all young people, especially young women, youth in rural areas and informal settlements, and those who continue to face multiple forms of exclusion. It also means recognising the rights and aspirations of LGBTQIA+ youth, who remain among the most marginalised in our society. It is particularly significant that this Indaba is taking place a day before we officially kick off Pride Month in South Africa—a reminder that building digital pathways to employment must also be about dignity, diversity, and equality.

The NYDA is committed to playing its role in this digital revolution. Our programmes on youth entrepreneurship support, grant funding, and skills development are already being aligned with the opportunities of the digital economy. We are working with partners across sectors to expand access to digital literacy, and coding.

The future we are building is one where every young South African can say: *"I am trained, I am skilled, and I am employable."* And to the youth gathered here and across the country, I say this: ***The digital economy belongs to you—claim it boldly, shape it with courage, and lead it with innovation.***



As we deliberate today, let us keep in mind that young people are not a problem to be solved—they are the solution. By investing in their creativity, their digital fluency, and their entrepreneurial spirit, we are investing in South Africa's prosperity.

Programme Director, as I get ready to sit it is now my privilege to invite the keynote speaker, who is a long standing public servant with extensive experience in governance and social justice having served Parliament since 2004. She has previously served as the Minister of Transport and Deputy Minister of Transport, Deputy Minister of Public Service and Administration and Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee of Police. She holds a Master's Degree in Curations and before joining Parliament she spent two decades in health education and principal of a nursing college. Colleagues and guests please help me welcome to the stage the Minister in the Presidency for Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, Hon. Chikunga to address us. Minister the stage is yours.

Thank you.