



NATIONAL YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
OUR YOUTH. OUR FUTURE.

**OFFICE OF THE
EXECUTIVE CHAIRPERSON**

**SPORT FACILITY HANDOVER WITH DSAC –
TAFELKOP, GROBLERSDAL**

20 FEBRUARY 2026

SPEAKING NOTES BY THE EXECUTIVE CHAIRPERSON OF THE NYDA, DR. SUNSHINE MYENDE, ON THE OCCASION OF THE SPORTS FACILITY HANDOVER AT BOLEU SECONDARY SCHOOL – *Message of support* | ±5 minutes

20 February 2026

*Programme Director,
The Royalty present,
The Deputy Minister of Sports, Arts and Culture, Hon. Peace Mabe,
Honourable MECs and Executive Mayors present,
Representatives of the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture,
Officials of the National Youth Development Agency,
School leadership, educators, parents and community members -
And most importantly, the young people gathered here today:*

Good morning

Ayeye bacha ayeye!

This year marks 50 years since 1976 - when young people stood up not only for education, but for dignity, voice and a future they could shape for themselves. In 2026, as we declare this *the Year of the Youth*, we honour that legacy by ensuring that opportunity is visible, practical and accessible. Today's handover of this multipurpose sports facility is part of that commitment.

But DM, infrastructure alone is not the victory. What also matters most is what this space will produce. Sport, arts and culture are not extracurricular luxuries. They are powerful tools of development. They build discipline. They build resilience. They build teamwork. They strengthen mental and physical health. They give young people purpose - and keep them positively engaged.

And today, I want to ask us to look beyond what we see on the field. When we watch a match, we see players. We do not immediately see the referees. The coaches. The physiotherapists. The sports doctors. The event organisers. The media producers. The designers of the sporting kits. The manufacturers of the equipment used. The entrepreneurs running leagues behind the scenes. Young people - your opportunity is not limited to the ball at your feet or in your hands. It exists in the entire ecosystem around it.

At the NYDA, we have supported thousands of young entrepreneurs - many of which are in retail sectors. From salons to car washes, food outlets to clothing stores. Gym owners and laundry owners. These are important businesses in communities. But we are also looking to broaden the horizon. We must support more young people entering the sports, arts and culture economy - whether in digital content, sports science, health services, production, logistics, marketing, or innovation.

Because South Africa is in the middle of a skills revolution. We cannot afford a mismatch between education and opportunity. We cannot afford young graduates sitting at home because their qualifications do not align with what the country needs.

So motho omocha, as you pursue your passion, ask yourself: What skills are in demand? Where are the gaps in our economy? How can my interests connect to national need? You may discover that sport connects to engineering. That sport connects to medicine. That sport connects to ICT and data analytics. That sport connects to entrepreneurship and manufacturing. That is the revolution - not only playing the game but mastering the industry around it. This is why collaborations like today matter. When government departments, municipalities, schools, SETAs and development agencies work together, we do not just hand over infrastructure - we build pathways.

After this formal programme, there will be an exhibition where the NYDA and our partners will be engaging directly with young people. I strongly encourage every learner here to visit the stalls. Ask questions. Explore funding opportunities. Explore training. Explore mentorship. Do not leave inspired only - leave informed.

As we stand here, we imagine the next generation rising from spaces like this - The next Relebohile Mofokeng emerging from a rural pitch. And not too far away from here, in KwaMhlanga, we have seen players like Elias Mokwana, who rose through local structures, played for Sekhukhune United, went on to represent at national level and now plays for a club in Saudi Arabia.

.
This is to say, your dreams are not distant. These are real pathways. But beyond the next striker or midfielder - we must also imagine the next sports scientist, the next physiotherapist, the next netball coach, the next volleyball referee, the next sports entrepreneur coming from this very court.

Because when we invest in young people, we invest in the future of this country. Tata Nelson Mandela once said: *"Sport has the power to change the world. It has the power to inspire. It has the power to unite people in a way that little else does."* And today we add - *Sport also has the power to employ, to innovate, and to transform economies.*

Let this court produce healthy bodies. Let it produce confident leaders. Let it produce industries. Let it produce futures.

Fifty years after 1976, the struggle has changed. Then, young people fought for the right to learn. Today, we must ensure they have the opportunity to earn.

May this space be where that future begins.

I thank you.