

TO ALL MEDIA/ NEWS EDITORS

JOHANNESBURG, GAUTENG

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NYDA REAFFIRMS COMMITMENT TO INCLUSIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT DURING DISABILITY RIGHTS AWARENESS MONTH

The National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) joins the nation in commemorating Disability Rights Awareness Month (DRAM), which is observed annually from 03 November 2025 to 03 December 2025. This period serves as a reminder of the Agency's commitment to building an inclusive and accessible NYDA that delivers impactful, meaningful youth development opportunities for every young person in the nation.

Under the current Board's strategic vision, inclusivity and accessibility are central pillars. The NYDA recognises that sustainable national development is unattainable as long as young people with disabilities face systemic barriers to opportunity. To address this, the Agency has finalised its Disability Strategy in line with its mother department (the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities) and the Cabinet's strategic priorities. The strategy forms part of the broader national programme, but focuses on the Agency's scope of operations, with an emphasis on rural communities, advocacy interventions, and policy-oriented campaigns.

As part of DRAM 2025, the NYDA is intensifying its efforts to integrate these youth into all its core programmes, ensuring that its services reach those in greatest need, including young people from rural areas, townships, and informal settlements. As part of its legislative mandate, the NYDA continues to champion programmes that advance youth participation in the economy, education, and governance.

Building on the momentum of the recent Youth Investment Indaba, the Agency reaffirms that young people with disabilities must be active participants in key economic sectors, including retail, manufacturing, mining, and technology. Through proposed mechanisms like the National Youth Fund, the NYDA is working to ensure equitable access to funding, training, and enterprise support for all.

To ensure its work is data-driven, the NYDA has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Statistician-General to establish a framework for evidence-based decision-making. This partnership will strengthen the Agency's commitment to data-driven policy, ensure that youth with disabilities are visible in national development statistics, and help shape inclusive, evidence-based interventions.

The NYDA Executive Board Chairperson, Dr Sunshine Myende, affirms that the Agency sees every young person as a source of potential and power. "For the NYDA, inclusion is not an act of charity, it is the cornerstone of justice. Youth with disabilities must not stand at the margins of transformation. Instead, they must be found at its very centre, shaping the economy, influencing policy, and redefining what progress means in South Africa."

The NYDA is a caring and capable institution, committed to advancing social and economic inclusion. Its message this Disability Rights Awareness Month is clear: youth with disabilities are not invisible, they are indispensable to South Africa's future.

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