



NATIONAL YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
OUR YOUTH. OUR FUTURE.

**OFFICE OF THE
EXECUTIVE CHAIRPERSON**

**INNOVATIVE BUILDING TECHNOLOGIES
SUMMIT – NASREC, JOHANNESBURG**

3 FEBRUARY 2026

**PANEL SPEAKING NOTES BY THE EXECUTIVE CHAIRPERSON OF THE NYDA,
DR. SUNSHINE MYENDE, ON THE OCCASION OF THE INNOVATIVE BUILDING
TECHNOLOGIES SUMMIT – Interventions to support youth and women owned
construction start ups**

03 February 2026

***Short opening after the Chair's profile has been read, and before you answer
the first question -***

Thank you, Dr Matshidze. Before I respond, I want to locate this conversation in the moment we are living in as a country.

This year marks 50 years since the 1976 generation asserted the right of young people to dignity and opportunity, 30 years since the finalisation of our Constitution, which affirms both dignity and the right to access adequate housing, and 70 years since women marched to insist that their voices and labour matter in shaping this nation.

These milestones remind us that inclusion has never happened by accident. It has always required deliberate choices about who we build for, who we invest in, and who gets to participate in the economy. That is the lens through which I approach this discussion on youth and women-owned construction enterprises.

MODERATOR QUESTIONS + CHAIR SPEAKING NOTES

Focus: Youth and Women-Owned Construction Start-Ups (NYDA)

1. From the NYDA's perspective, what are the biggest challenges facing young people and women who want to enter the construction sector?

- The barriers are structural, not personal.
- Young people and women struggle with access to start-up capital, compliance, tools, and procurement pipelines.
- For women, safety, perception, and exclusion from networks remain additional hurdles.

Key line:

“Young people and women are not excluded because they lack potential - they are excluded by how the construction system is currently designed. What IBT's do is they allow us to build a system that is mindful of women and young people.”

2. Why does construction remain so difficult for youth and women to access, despite being a priority sector for development?

Speaking notes:

- Policy intent is strong, but delivery systems are fragmented.
- Skills development, finance, and procurement often operate in silos.
- Youth and women are trained but not absorbed into real projects.

Key line:

“Training without pathways does not translate into participation.”

3. How does the NYDA currently support youth- and women-owned construction start-ups beyond funding?

Speaking notes:

- NYDA combines financial and non-financial support – name products NYDA offers.
 - Construction apprenticeships in North West, Mpumalanga, and Northern Cape.
 - 75 young people trained over three years, many transitioning into employment or enterprise.
 - Total investment of approximately R15 million, supported by CETA partnerships.
 - Where conditions are right, women do participate
- This contrasts powerfully with the NYDA–CETA apprenticeship programmes, where: 60% of beneficiaries are women, yet 40% are men

Key line:

“Funding does open the door - but capability, compliance, and market readiness keep it open.”

4. What has the NYDA learned from supporting youth and women-owned construction enterprises so far?

Speaking notes:

- Start-up support is important, but post-start-up support is critical. That is why the NYDA has an aftercare programme.
- Enterprises struggle most with sustainability and scaling.
- Those receiving both skills and enterprise support are more resilient.

Optional reference:

- NYDA supported 30+ youth-owned construction enterprises in a single quarter.

5. Where do you see the biggest gaps in the current support ecosystem for youth and women-owned construction start-ups?

Speaking notes:

- The biggest gap is the transition from support to market.
- Access to tools, working capital, and predictable projects.
- Procurement systems still favour established firms.

6. How do Innovative Building Technologies change the opportunities available to young people and women in construction?

Speaking notes:

- IBTs shift construction toward industrialised and skills-based environments.
- Open opportunities in manufacturing, quality assurance, logistics, digital design, and green technologies.
- These roles are often safer and more accessible for women.

Key line:

“IBTs don’t just modernise construction - they widen who can participate.”

7. In practical terms, how can IBTs lower entry barriers for youth- and women-owned start-ups?

Speaking notes:

- Youth and women don't need to own full systems.
- Modular participation through:
 - Component manufacturing
 - Installation and finishing
 - Plumbing and electrical services
 - Plant and machinery hire

Link to NYDA:

- NYDA already supports youth enterprises in plumbing, electrical, brick manufacturing, and plant hire.

8. How important are TVET colleges and occupational training in preparing youth and women for construction opportunities?

Speaking notes:

- Construction needs artisans and technicians at scale.
- TVETs align directly with IBT skill demands.
- NYDA apprenticeship models show this pathway works.

Key line:

“TVET colleges are institutions of choice for youth and women if we are serious about inclusion at scale.”

9. How does the NYDA work with other stakeholders to support youth and women-owned construction enterprises?

Speaking notes:

- NYDA plays a convening and coordinating role.
- Partnerships with CETA, provincial departments, DFIs, and industry.
- NYDA does not duplicate - it connects ecosystems.

10. Access to markets and procurement remains a challenge for youth and women-owned start-ups. How does the NYDA view this issue?

Speaking notes:

- Market access is the single biggest constraint.
- Without predictable pipelines, enterprises cannot plan or scale.
- Procurement design determines who participates.

11. What role should large construction firms and IBT system owners play in supporting youth and women-owned enterprises?

Speaking notes:

- Supplier development, subcontracting, and aggregation models.
- Mentorship and access to value chains.
- Inclusion must be intentional - not incidental.

12. How can we ensure women-owned construction enterprises are supported not only to enter the sector, but to remain and grow?

Speaking notes:

- Focus on safety, predictability, and skills-based participation.
- NYDA apprenticeships have recorded around 60% female participation, showing women enter when conditions are right.

13. Looking ahead, what future interventions does the NYDA believe are needed to scale youth and women participation in construction?**Speaking notes:**

- Better alignment between:
 - Skills and IBT demand
 - Finance and delivery pipelines
 - Procurement and transformation targets
- Shift from isolated programmes to systemic alignment.

14. How does the IBT Social Compact create opportunities for youth and women-owned construction start-ups?**Speaking notes:**

- The Social Compact aligns commitments across stakeholders.
- Moves inclusion from intention to accountability.
- Youth and women must be built into implementation, not added later.

15. If we succeed, what would a transformed construction sector look like for youth and women in five years' time?**Speaking Notes:**

- Youth and women-owned enterprises are participants by design.
- Integrated into skills pipelines, IBT roll-out, procurement, and finance.
- Fewer exceptions, more systems that work.

KEY LINE:

“Success is when participation is normal, not remarkable.”

FINAL ANCHOR LINE (Chair can use anytime):

“The NYDA’s role is to help the system work better for young people and women - not to replace the system.”