



DRAFT SPEAKING NOTES

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OVERSITE VISIT

**PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON WOMEN, YOUTH AND
PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES PORTFOLIO
COMMITTEE**

28 APRIL 2026



Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, Hon. Liezl Linda van der Merwe and Honourable Members.

Minister of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, Sindisiwe Chikunga

Deputy Minister , Steve Letsike

All Parliament Support Staff present

NYDA Deputy Chairperson of the Board, Mr Bonga Makhanya, **and Board Members**

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Mr Ndumiso Kubheka, **Executive Directors** and **NYDA Colleagues**

INTRODUCTION

This engagement marks our third interaction with the Committee since the appointment by His Excellency President Cyril Ramaphosa and since we assumed office on 1 August 2025. This is an important opportunity for us to account for progress, reflect candidly on constraints, and outline our strategic direction going forward.

The work of the Agency is undertaken within the framework of the NYDA Act, as amended in 2024, and remains aligned to the National Youth Policy 2020-2030 and the National Development Plan 2030.

Consultations on the Integrated Youth Development Strategy (IYDS) with provinces and local youth stakeholders are at an advanced stage.

At the same time, we await the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities' assessment of the National Youth Policy.

The NYDA's mandate is executed within a complex and evolving national, continental, and global environment that continues to shape both the opportunities and constraints facing young people.

Oversight remains a cornerstone of constitutional democracy, serving as a critical mechanism through which accountability, transparency, and responsiveness are maintained within public institutions.

For the NYDA, engagements of this nature are not merely compliance exercises. They provide a platform for constructive scrutiny, enabling the Agency to align more



effectively with national priorities, strengthen its performance, and refine its programmes based on informed feedback and constructive criticism.

This visit builds on the Committee's oversight work in KwaZulu-Natal in March 2025, where you visited our offices, met our staff and engaged with beneficiaries.

For us, this reflects a sustained commitment to ensuring that public resources translate into meaningful outcomes.

In this sense, oversight is inherently developmental as it sharpens institutional effectiveness and reinforces public confidence in the work of the Agency. And this is the spirit in which we welcome you.

This visit takes place in a context which holds immense promise and offers green shoots – as the President often says. Although, in being frank, that said, too many young people languish in anxiety and despair.

SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT – YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT, POVERTY & INEQUALITY

Africa remains the youngest continent globally, with more than 400 million people between the ages of 15 and 35. This demographic reality presents a significant opportunity for inclusive growth, but only where there is sustained and deliberate investment in education, skills development, and economic participation.

In South Africa, however, youth unemployment, inequality, and poverty continue to define the lived reality of millions. Recent data released by Statistics South Africa confirms that the expanded unemployment rate remains above 42%, with young people bearing the greatest burden. Unemployment among those aged 15 to 24 remains above 60%, while for those aged 25 to 34 exceeds 40%.

Equally concerning is the persistence of young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEET), with approximately 3.6 million youth in the 15 to 24 age group falling into this category. These outcomes are further shaped by structural inequalities, with higher unemployment rates among Black African youth and women, reflecting enduring historical and socio-economic disparities.

These challenges are compounded by uncertain economic growth projections of approximately 1.5-1.6% for 2026. Taken together, these indicators underscore a central reality: without accelerated and targeted intervention, the promise of a demographic dividend will remain unrealised.



FIFTH BOARD OF DIRECTORS STRATEGY

It is for this reason that our Board Strategy emphasises the urgency of addressing youth development within this context of growing global risks, which includes trade wars, debt, climate change, cybersecurity, and local policy uncertainties.

The Board's strategic focus is anchored in **four interrelated priorities: youth empowerment, economic transformation, equity and inclusion, and governance and accountability**. Together, these pillars seek to improve service delivery, unlock economic opportunities in high-impact sectors, remove systemic barriers for marginalised youth, and strengthen institutional performance through greater accountability and transparency.

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE PLAN FOR 2026/27 & the Revised 5-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN 2025 - 2030

In response to the above context, the NYDA's 2026/27 Annual Performance Plan and the Revised 2025-2030 Strategic Plan represent a deliberate recalibration of the Agency's approach, with a sharper focus on measurable impact.

At the centre of this shift is a prioritisation of youth entrepreneurship and job creation as key levers for economic inclusion. This is complemented by the repositioning of the National Youth Service as a structured pathway that links community service with skills development and entry into the labour market.

The Agency is also undertaking internal reforms to improve operational efficiency, streamline processes, and ensure that functions are located where they can be most effectively delivered. This is coupled with a stronger emphasis on evidence-based planning and clearly defined performance outcomes.

As the NYDA approaches two decades of existence, the Strategic Plan reflects a firm commitment to addressing the structural drivers of youth unemployment, poverty, and inequality through coordinated, scalable, and sustainable interventions.

The Annual Performance Plan before this Committee is aligned with the priorities of the Seventh Administration, as articulated in the Medium-Term Development Plan, and gives effect to key commitments outlined in the State of the Nation Address

INCLUSION STRATEGIES: DISABILITY AND RURAL



The NYDA continues to advance inclusion as a central organising principle of its work, with a deliberate shift from compliance-based approaches to systemic integration.

Following the launch of the Disability Inclusion Strategy in November 2025, the Agency prioritised a set of immediate, practical interventions to improve accessibility. By January 2026, all 43 operational centres had undergone accessibility audits, the findings of which are now informing phased improvements to infrastructure and service delivery environments.

This has been complemented by the introduction of an Accessible Communications Protocol, ensuring that digital and public-facing content is usable by young people who rely on assistive technologies. The continued provision of South African Sign Language interpreters at key events, together with the transition to accessible document formats, reflects a broader institutional shift towards universal access.

Internally, capacity has been strengthened through the rollout of Disability Sensitivity Training, ensuring that staff are better equipped to engage inclusively and effectively.

In parallel, the Agency has finalised its revised Rural Strategy and are going to launch the strategy. This strategy is aimed at expanding reach, improving access, and ensuring that programmes are responsive to the specific realities of young people in rural communities.

CONCLUSION

The oversight visit that will be conducted by the Committee tomorrow is an important opportunity not only to account, but to reflect on the effectiveness of our interventions and to strengthen the Agency's responsiveness to the needs of young people.

While progress has been made in expanding access and improving delivery, the scale and persistence of youth unemployment and exclusion require sustained urgency, innovation, and coordination across all spheres of government and society.

The NYDA remains resolute in working with Parliament and all stakeholders to advance a South Africa in which every young person has a meaningful opportunity to participate, contribute, and succeed.

As the Agency, we are ready to welcome you to our Head Office.

Honourable Chair, with your permission; Allow me to hand over the CEO Mr Ndumiso Kubheka who will also be assisted by the CFO and EDs to take the Committee through the Annual Performance Plan 2026/27 and Amended Strategic Plan 2025-2030.

I thank you.