



# **DRAFT SPEAKING NOTES FOR EXECUTIVE CHAIRPERSON DR SUNSHINE MYENDE**

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

## **OPENING REMARKS**

03 MARCH 2026

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**Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee**

**on Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities**, Hon. Liezl Linda van der Merwe,  
and

**All Honourable Members of the Portfolio Committee**

**Deputy Minister of Women, Youth and Person with Disabilities** Steve Letsike

**Executive Deputy Chairperson**, Mr Bonga Makhanya,

**The Board of the NYDA**

**NYDA Chief Executive Officer (CEO)** Mr. Ndumiso Kubheka, and the NYDA Team

**Portfolio Committee Staff** Content Advisor, Researcher, and Committee Secretary

**To All of the Youth of South Africa**

**Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Women, Youth and Persons with**

Honourable Chairperson, and

Honourable Members,

## **INTRODUCTION**

Thank you for the opportunity to reflect on the work of the NYDA during the 2024/25 financial year. Today, I offer not a technical summary, but a strategic reflection of where the Agency stands, where it is headed, and how the Board has positioned the NYDA to better serve the young people of our nation.

## **GOVERNANCE AND PERFORMANCE**

We meet at a time when young South Africans continue to confront intersecting crises: persistent unemployment, unequal access to opportunity, and the deep-rooted spatial divides between rural and urban communities. These challenges demand an institution that is credible, accessible, and activist in its orientation, an institution that stands with young people wherever they are, not only where it is convenient to be.



When this Board assumed oversight, we made a set of clear commitments: to rebuild trust in the NYDA, to stabilise the Agency's systems and leadership, and to ensure that accountability and impact become the hallmarks of the organisation. I am encouraged to report that the Annual Report reflects meaningful progress. Although this is work of the previous Board, we have undertaken the task to conclude that business in accordance to the legislated prescripts.

The improvement of the audit outcome, from a previous qualification to an unqualified audit, is not just a technical milestone. It signals something deeper, a governance culture that is maturing. The Board worked closely with management to strengthen financial controls, stabilise leadership in the finance division, and enforce disciplined oversight. As a result, the Agency recorded zero irregular or wasteful expenditure and achieved every one of its 29 Annual Performance Plan targets. These are commitments fulfilled.

## **A COMMITMENT TO AN INCLUSIVE NYDA**

Yet governance is only one part of the story. Our mission is to build an NYDA that reaches young people where they live, especially those in rural areas, small towns, and township communities who often feel forgotten. This reporting period marks a shift toward that vision.

Through strengthened partnerships with municipalities and provincial governments, the NYDA significantly expanded its reach. More than half of the entrepreneurs supported through the Grant Programme came from rural and peri-urban areas. Job placements increased in provinces such as Limpopo, Mpumalanga, the Eastern Cape and North West, places where young people have long faced barriers to formal employment. And through the revitalised National Youth Service, we brought paid service and skills opportunities into communities that have historically been underserved. These results reflect not only programme delivery, but a deliberate strategy to shift the centre of gravity of youth development toward the margins.

Recognising that inclusion requires intentionality, the Board established a new Transformation Committee, an instrument to ensure that marginalised young people are not an afterthought but central to the Agency's strategy. This Committee oversees implementation of the Disability Strategy and the Rural Youth Development Strategy,



ensures the collection of disaggregated data, and drives partnerships with organisations representing youth with disabilities, rural youth, young women, LGBTQI+ youth, and other historically excluded groups.

This is the beginning of a more inclusive NYDA, one that not only counts young people, but sees them.

The Board is equally encouraged by improvements across the Agency's operational areas. Partnerships mobilised more than R400 million in support of youth development. Over 2 000 youth-owned enterprises received financial support, contributing to more than 7 000 jobs created and sustained. More than 26 000 young people were placed into jobs, and over 48 000 were equipped with life and work-readiness skills. These achievements are not isolated, they reflect a coherent, integrated approach to unlocking pathways for young people.

Looking ahead, the Board's priority is to consolidate this momentum. We intend to deepen the transformation agenda, extend rural and township reach through mobile and digital platforms, strengthen intergovernmental coordination, and drive the Agency toward a clean audit. We will continue to enhance governance, modernise ICT systems, and ensure that the NYDA remains a credible and trusted partner for youth development.

Honourable Members, the story of this Annual Report is ultimately one of an institution regaining its confidence and sharpening its strategic focus. The Board is fully aware of the scale of the work that remains. But we stand firm in our commitment to ensuring that the NYDA becomes an agency that young people experience not as a distant bureaucracy, but as an ally, present, accessible, responsive, and transformative.

To the young people of South Africa, we see you, we hear you, and we are committed to walking with you. The success of the Agency will ultimately be measured by the opportunities that reach you, wherever you are.

I thank you.