



NATIONAL YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
OUR YOUTH. OUR FUTURE.

**OFFICE OF THE
EXECUTIVE CHAIRPERSON**

**BRICS YOUTH DIALOGUE ON SCIENCE,
TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION
– FUJIAN PROVINCE, CHINA**

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SPEAKING NOTES BY THE EXECUTIVE CHAIRPERSON OF THE NYDA DR. SUNSHINE MYENDE ON THE OCCASION OF THE BRICS YOUTH DIALOGUE ON SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

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Your Excellencies, distinguished representatives of the All-China Youth Federation, colleagues from the BRICS Youth Council, young innovators, entrepreneurs and experts –

Good afternoon

It is an honour for South Africa to participate in this BRICS Youth Dialogue on Science, Technology and Innovation under the theme “Youth-Led Technological Innovation, Co-Creating a Shared Future.” This theme resonates deeply with some of South Africa’s policies, through the National Youth Policy, and the NYDA’s Integrated Youth Development Strategy - to champion inclusive, technology-driven youth empowerment across our nation.

Our delegation has been inspired by the innovation landscape here in Fujian Province - from the China-BRICS Science and Innovation Incubation Park to the BRICS Partnership on New Industrial Revolution Innovation Center, which stands as a global model for cooperation in industrial transformation, technology transfer and talent development. These institutions embody the spirit of multilateral collaboration that BRICS continues to champion.

The All-China Youth Federation has outlined clear intentions for this Dialogue:

- To promote exchange and practical cooperation in science, technology and innovation;
- To explore creative and innovative opportunities for young people across BRICS;
- To connect participants to international science, technology & innovation ecosystems; and
- To shape coherent work plans for advancing our shared innovation agenda.

These priorities mirror South Africa’s commitment to building a youth-centred innovation economy - one that empowers minority groups - young women, youth with disabilities, rural innovators, and emerging digital entrepreneurs.

President Xi Jinping once said - “Innovation is the soul of a nation’s progress, and the inexhaustible driving force for a country’s prosperity.”

Colleagues, today we have brought a component of the nation’s soul as part of our delegation - I am proud to introduce Ms. Sindisiwe Ndlovu, the young South African beneficiary accompanying our delegation. She is the Founder and Managing Director of Sinnotive Thinkers, a KwaZulu-Natal based creative and digital innovation

company specialising in strategic communication, brand development, digital skills training and entrepreneurial capacity building. Her work is anchored in innovation, youth empowerment and digital transformation, and she was recently recognised as a top finalist in the MTN Women in Digital Business Challenge.

Sindisiwe represents exactly what this Dialogue seeks to nurture: a generation of African innovators who use technology to solve real problems, uplift communities and build sustainable futures.

Furthermore, I want to acknowledge the contribution of other young South Africans in the in the Global Youth Development Programmes, such as Bridget Mkhondo. As the Founder and Managing Director of BW & Daughters Farms, specialising in organic vegetable production, Bridget's work invites us to consider an essential question: How can we integrate traditional agriculture practice with modern technological innovation in a sustainable way?

As BRICS countries deepen cooperation in artificial intelligence, data science, biotech, green technology and advanced manufacturing, we must ensure that young people are not only beneficiaries of global innovation - but equal partners in shaping it.

This requires:

- Cross-border incubation and co-innovation programmes;
- Ethical technology practices guided by principles of privacy, inclusion and fairness;
- Stronger investment in digital skills and STEM pathways;
- And accessible funding channels for youth-led enterprises.

If we commit to these pillars, we will truly co-create a shared future - one where the brilliance of young people becomes the driving force of our collective prosperity.

Allow me to close with the words of President Thabo Mbeki, who reminded us: "The future belongs to those who turn challenges into possibility, and possibility into innovation."

May this Dialogue strengthen our resolve to build that future together - boldly, collaboratively, and with young people at the centre.

Thank you.