



SPEAKING NOTES FOR EXECUTIVE CHAIRPERSON
DR SUNSHINE MYENDE

NYS ROADSHOW
MALAMULELE, LIMPOPO

11 JUNE 2026

**SPEAKING NOTES BY THE EXECUTIVE CHAIRPERSON OF THE NYDA ON THE
OCCASION OF THE NYS ROADSHOW IN MALAMULELE – Address | ±10 minutes**

11 June 2026

*Programme Director,
His Worship the Executive Mayor,
Traditional Leaders present,
Representatives of Government,
Our Implementing Partners and Stakeholders,
Distinguished Guests,
And above all, the young people of Malamulele and the greater Collins Chabane
Municipality,*

Good morning

We have gathered here this morning because there are young people in Malamulele with dreams that deserve a chance, ideas that deserve investment and futures that deserve opportunity. We are not here to host a Roadshow as a tick box exercise, but we are here because the distance between talent and opportunity remains far too great for too many young South Africans, and this National Youth Service Roadshow is about closing that distance.

As South Africa commemorates 50 years since the historic June 16 Uprising, we do so under the banner of RESET@50 - The Future Calls, reminding ourselves that “Our National Commitment to the Future, for Freedom Lives in Every Generation.”

The young people of 1976 fought for the right to learn. The young people of 2026 are fighting for the right to participate meaningfully in the economy. Their struggle is against unemployment, exclusion and inequality. Their demand is simple: give us the opportunity to contribute.

And as we reflect on fifty years of democracy, we must ask ourselves an uncomfortable question: Have we truly removed the barriers that prevent young people from realising their full potential? Because the unfinished business of freedom is no longer only political freedom. It is economic freedom.



The greatest inequality facing young South Africans today is not ambition. It is not talent, or determination. It is access. Access to skills, experience, finance, markets, digital connectivity and access to opportunity. That is precisely why the National Youth Service, as part of the Presidential Youth Employment Intervention, exists.

The Presidential Youth Employment Intervention recognises that youth unemployment cannot be solved by one institution acting alone. It requires coordinated action across government, business, civil society and communities themselves. National Youth Service is one of the practical ways in which that national commitment is translated into real opportunities for young people in places like Malamulele.

National Youth Service is founded on a simple but powerful idea: that young people can strengthen their communities while strengthening themselves. Through service, participants develop practical skills, leadership, confidence and work experience, while contributing to nation-building, social cohesion and their own long-term employability. It is an investment not only in communities, but in the character, capability and future of young South Africans.

It also exists because we recognise a painful reality. Too many employers ask for experience before offering employment. Too many young people cannot gain experience because no one gives them the opportunity to start. National Youth Service exists to break that cycle. It is a bridge from learning to earning. A bridge from exclusion to participation, from potential to productivity, from hope to opportunity. And ultimately, a bridge from where a young person is today to where they deserve to be tomorrow.

This roadshow is therefore not simply about sharing information. It is about ensuring that young people in Malamulele know that opportunity is not something reserved for big cities or privileged communities. Opportunity belongs here too.

When I look at Malamulele, I do not see limitation. I see fertile land that can support modern agriculture and agro-processing. I see young entrepreneurs already trading, innovating and creating livelihoods in informal markets. I see cultural richness and tourism potential that can create sustainable local economies. I see young people who, with the right support, could become employers rather than job seekers.

So the challenge is not whether there is a lack of talent or effort from young people. The challenge has been connecting talent to opportunity. And that is exactly what the NYDA seeks to do.



Imagine a young National Youth Service participant helping a local agricultural cooperative embrace digital tools to reach new markets. Imagine another supporting tourism initiatives that showcase the rich cultural heritage of this area to visitors from across South Africa and beyond. Imagine young people using technology to help small businesses grow, supporting environmental projects that preserve this beautiful region, or strengthening community initiatives that improve everyday life. What the National Youth Service would've done is not simply offering work experience, but nation-building in action.

At the National Youth Development Agency, we are not merely administrators of programmes. We are builders of pathways. For some young people, National Youth Service will be that first pathway. For others, the next step may be entrepreneurship support, grant funding, business development services, mentorship or access to markets through the broader NYDA ecosystem.

Our responsibility is to ensure that every opportunity opens another door. Our commitment is to walk alongside young people as they move from one opportunity to the next - connecting them to skills development, entrepreneurship support, mentorship, business finance, market access and employment pathways. We measure our success not by the number of roadshows we hold, but by the number of futures we help unlock. Because National Youth Service should never be the destination. It should be the launchpad.

The Youth Month theme: RESET@50 also challenges us to rethink where opportunity lives. For too long, geography has determined destiny. A young person should not have to leave Malamulele simply because opportunity is only found in another geographical area. Programmes must travel to communities. Services must reach rural areas. Investment must follow talent wherever it exists. And this Roadshow is also to communicate exactly that - It says to every young person in this hall: we have come to you because you matter.

As our economy becomes increasingly digital, we must also recognise that digital inclusion is no longer optional. In today's world, data is not a luxury. Connectivity is not a convenience. It is economic infrastructure. No graduate should have to choose between buying bread and buying data to submit a CV. No entrepreneur should lose customers because of poor connectivity. No learner should be excluded from opportunity because they cannot get online.

And as artificial intelligence reshapes industries across the globe, rural youth must not become spectators to the future. They must become innovators. They must become creators. They must become entrepreneurs. They must become leaders.



Equally, we cannot speak about economic inclusion without speaking about women. Young women continue to sustain families, businesses and communities, yet many still face barriers to finance, ownership and leadership. When women thrive, communities thrive. When women lead, economies grow. Women's empowerment is not simply the right thing to do. It is the smart thing to do.

And young people themselves must have a genuine seat at the table. Not because they are the leaders of tomorrow. But because they are already shaping today. No one understands youth challenges better than young people themselves. Which is why solutions must be designed with them, not merely for them.

But let us also be honest. Government cannot solve youth unemployment alone. Business must create opportunities. Communities must mentor. Schools and colleges must prepare young people for a changing world. Families must nurture ambition. And young people must seize every opportunity placed before them.

To every young person sitting in this hall today, if you are wondering whether this opportunity is meant for you, let me answer that question clearly: It is. Ask the questions. Register your interest. Speak to our teams. Engage with our partners. Take that first step. Because your future may not change overnight, but it can begin to change the moment you decide to participate.

The generation of 1976 handed us the keys to political freedom. Our generation must build the doors to economic freedom. That is what RESET@50 demands of us. It demands that we remove barriers instead of accepting them. That we build bridges instead of walls. That we invest in young people not as beneficiaries of development, but as partners in development.

At the National Youth Development Agency, we believe that every young person deserves the opportunity to learn, to serve, to innovate and to lead. And we believe that communities like Malamulele are not waiting for the future - they are already shaping it.

So let this National Youth Service Roadshow be remembered not as another event on a calendar, but as the day someone in this room took the first step towards changing their life. Let it be remembered as the moment opportunity met ambition. Let it be remembered as the day bridges were built. Because freedom truly lives in every generation. But freedom flourishes only when opportunity reaches every generation. And together, through service, through partnership and through action, we can ensure that no young person is left behind.



I thank you.