

ADDRESS BY EXECUTIVE CHAIRPERSON OF THE NATIONAL YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (NYDA), MS ASANDA LUWACA AT THE DIALOGUE WITH STUDENTS OF NELSON MANDELA METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY, GQEBERHA, EASTERN CAPE, 10 JUNE 2022

Greetings,

We are alive to the reality that Institutions of higher learning are the microcosm and lifeblood of any society. I am encouraged to see Yolokazi and Zikhona as one the studentpreneurs present with us this afternoon and we hope that such youth can one day become beneficiaries of our products and services.

Why a University and not a township? Precisely because when we say youth are not homogenous, it's because we are cognisant that failing to understand their complexities would be a disservice. So we need to be an Agency that is responsive to to all cohorts of youth: knowledge producers in institutions of higher learning; youth from rural and peri-urban; youth living with disabilities; unemployed young graduates, etc.

There is a saying that goes: "If the lion doesn't tell his story, the hunter will". We the youth need to get to the point where we begin to tell our stories. We rely on our young creatives to come on board in this regarding because, whilst we acknowledge the historical importance of the generation of 1976, we need to start documenting our lives experiences as the youth of today. We can all agree that we are tired of watching the same narratives every year of Sarafina being displayed on our public broadcasting channels. We need to start watching fresh content from us telling our own stories.

We need to be seized with critically reflecting and asking ourselves, "What kind of education or vocational training is needed to equip young people with skills necessary for future jobs and economies?" For instance, enhancing education in areas related to the demands of the digital economy and ensuring young people are at the forefront of innovation. How do we respond to the impact of the global health pandemic on young people and their mental health and wellbeing?

This year's National Youth Day and Youth Month will be commemorated under the theme: "Promoting sustainable livelihood and resilience of young people for a better tomorrow." It is against this backdrop that we need tangible interventions to the constantly changing work environment, having Work Readiness, Job Preparedness and Life Skills as an essential part of being able to meet the challenges of everyday life.

My remarks this afternoon comes against the backdrop of the serious economic and social challenges faced by the country in general, and young people in particularly. All of this has been fiercely compounded by the Covid-19 pandemic. Young people disproportionately bear the pain of these economic and social challenges. Youth unemployment, poverty and unemployment remain one of the foremost challenges that our democratic South Africa faces.

With a recovering and growing revenue base, strong partnerships and supportive structures within and outside of government, the NYDA remains resolute in tackling the challenges in youth development.

The NYDA was established to be a single, unitary structure addressing youth development issues at National, Provincial and Local Government level.

The main aim is to make youth development part and parcel of what other line departments are delivering, to the point where organizational and individual performance agreements get to a point where they include youth development as a clear area of focus. Our role, therefore, is to remove barriers to success and to assist with the development and delivery of critical success factors.

Our apex priority as the Agency is to foster a conducive environment for the creation of sustainable jobs for the youth. Young people are growing impatient on the lack of meaningful solutions to resolve their plight.

We were appointed by the President of the republic in November last year, and assumed office in December. From our appointment, as the board, we sat and deliberated on a multitude of issues faced by the youth. But what became clear, and can attest, is the passion the board has in ensuring that during our tenure, we are able to leave an indelible footprint on the lives of young people.

Vision, as the Board, is to build:

- A credible, capable, inclusive and activist development agency that is responsive to the plight of South Africa's youth

Our Mission:

- To mainstream youth issues into society through stakeholder coordination
- To facilitate and champion youth development with all sectors of society.

At the NYDA, we offer a range of financial and non-financial support, which I'm sure Mr Bango will expatiate when he presents the APP of the NYDA. some of which include:

- The Solomon Mahlangu Scholarship Fund is a R10 million fund to financially support young people in pursuing quality education in institutions of higher learning- with young in rural areas a primary target.
- The National Youth Service Programme (NYSP) is a government initiative aimed at engaging South African youth in community service activities to strengthen service delivery, build patriotism, promote nation-building, foster social cohesion and to assist the youth to acquire occupational skills necessary to access sustainable livelihood opportunities.
- The NYDA Grant Programme is designed to provide young entrepreneurs with an opportunity to access both financial and non- financial business development support in order to enable them to establish or grow their businesses.
- The NYDA JOBS Programme, which is a program unemployed youth seeking employment opportunities. It is a product managed through the Education and Skills Development unit at the NYDA and seeks to contribute the unemployment challenge by helping to link unemployed youth to employment opportunities and other skills development-related opportunities.
- The Entrepreneurship Development Programme is aimed at creating a conducive environment for young entrepreneurs to access relevant entrepreneurship skills, knowledge, values, and attitudes for their businesses. The programme offers entrepreneurship trainings that responds

appropriately and adequately to the market and business needs of the young people.

Young people are the lifeblood of this country. Our participation in the mainstream economy ought to be the responsibility of all stakeholders. President Ramaphosa spoke about the need to build social compact to grow the economy, create jobs and alleviate hunger. To be effective, this social compact needs to include every South African and every part of our society, including our youth.

On behalf of the board, i look forward to the outcomes emanating from the fruitful engagements that will offer responses to the impact of the pandemic, the growing mental health challenges confronting young people, modernizing the skill base to take advantage of the 4th Industrial Revolution.

In addition, ours is to ensure we cultivating an environment where more young people can participate in sectors such as agriculture, construction and digital markets to name a few.

In closing, the IYDS is a framework within which all youth-related work in South Africa can be coordinated and linked, in order to build relationships, foster information-sharing, avoid duplication and ultimately maximize impact. The latter provides meaning to our gathering and confirms that indeed, the new era on youth development is on course!

In closing, I wish to end off my remarks by stating that the Agency must resonate with every young person as an impact-driven organisation that every young person must have confidence in, as a vehicle that will ultimately drive the agenda for youth development.

I thank you.