

**ADDRESS BY EXECUTIVE CHAIRPERSON OF THE NATIONAL YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (NYDA), MS ASANDA LUWACA DURING THE SITE VISIT TO THE PROPELLA BUSINESS INCUBATOR, GQEBERHA, EASTERN CAPE, 10 JUNE 2022**

Distinguished Guests  
All youth Formations  
Greetings – All Protocol Observed  
Ladies and Gentlemen

Morris Isaacson School played an important role at the start of the Soweto Uprising in 1976. Tsietsi Mashinini was a student at this school and was the leader of the march of protest. In 1993, Nelson Mandela visited the school to celebrate its role in the Soweto uprisings and nation's transformation.

This school, therefore, presents a perfect background against which we should launch Youth Month 2022 and to set the tone for the Nelson Mandela Dialogue Session. At the school we ran a short competition for learners to win a laptop. This was part of our efforts to bring access to information and communication technologies to young people.

That said, access to information and communication technologies (ICT) is still a problem with only 22,7% of South Africans owning a computer and only 9,1% with access to the internet at home. Digital inequalities also manifest in geographic terms with 15,4% of those in metros, 7,2% of those in urban areas having access to internet at home as compared to only 1,2 % of those living in rural areas.

Our biggest concern for future generations of South Africans is that the rapid developments of Artificial Intelligence technologies leave majority of our youth behind. The development of a digital innovation hub is an increasingly urgent intervention that will enable access to ICT is a cross-cutting area, that has huge potential to contribute to economic growth and development.

The question we are grappling with as the NYDA, how can we play a more critical role in the ICT sector. That is why we felt it necessary as the NYDA to come and learn and see the work you have been doing at Propella incubation.

Our figures regarding our grant programme tell an interesting story across all provinces but the Eastern Cape in particular.

#### **GRANT PROGRAMME**

The Grant Programme is designed to provide young entrepreneurs an opportunity to access both the financial and non-financial business development support to establish their survivalist businesses. The programme focuses on youth entrepreneurs who are at intentional, nascent and new stages of enterprise development.

Young people in the service sector consumed almost 50% of the grants issued in the period under review. The service sector consists of consultancy, car wash, maintenance, artisans etc. The retail sector was also well represented in young people receiving grants. However, the data tells us there is not much demand seen from young people in sectors such as Education, Transport, Marketing and Arts and Culture, and ICT in particular.

When we break the data further down according to grant distribution across province , Gauteng

disabused most of the grants followed by Kwa Zulu Natal, Mpumalanga and Western Cape. Least disbursements were from Eastern Cape, Northwest and Free State. Spatial distribution in Eastern Cape is 4% of the total distribution.

So, what does the data tell us? How do we begin to answer this against the backdrop of this year's National Youth Day and Youth Month will be celebrated under the theme: "Promoting sustainable livelihood and resilience of young people for a better tomorrow?"

Zain asked the question, how does an individual, know how to save water? The smart leakage detection system, is a great example of how to use technology to respond to climate change.

Are we engaging with relevant stakeholders in order to create relationships that young people can leverage of?

This is just one of the questions and the list goes on. Put simply, what role does the NYDA play in providing access to young people who will use science, engineering and artificial intelligence to address the ripple effect of unemployment, poverty and inequality facing the youth in South Africa.

The NYDA recognises the importance of the private sector, government, and civil society in taking this opportunity to reflect or even re-imagine its commitment, empowerment and development of youth. As they are responsible for driving sustainability and innovation of organisations in the future.

As such the NYDA recognises the valuable contribution by the Propella Business Incubator in areas such as science, technology and renewable energy for the benefit of humanity.

I thank you.