

INPUT BY EXECUTIVE CHAIRPERSON OF THE NATIONAL YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (NYDA), MS ASANDA LUWACA AT THE METHODIST CHURCH OF SOUTH AFRICA WESLEY GUILD, GQEBERHA, EASTERN CAPE, 11 JUNE 2022

One Heart; One Way!

Okokuqala, ndithanda ukuxolisa ngo fika emva kwe xesha. Zininzi izinto ezisiphazimisileyo namhlanje.

Ma ndi thathe eli thuba ndi acknowledge:

- President
- Abafundisi abakhoyo namhlanje
- MMC Tukela Zumani
- Ulutsha olukhoyo

I greet you all in the name of our Lord and saviour, Jesus Christ, Amen.

As we commemorate Youth Month this year, we do so cognisant of the fact that we have inherited a system that was deliberate in the exclusion and marginalisation of Blacks in General, but Africans in Particular. When we say the structure of our economy remains a dual economy with one of the highest, persistent rates of unemployment, inequality and poverty in the world, we are not blind to the historical role the Apartheid system played and the Remnants of such a system still persist in today's society. Which is precisely why we need to be intentional about ensuring youth are able to meaningfully participate in the economy.

The agenda of the church is not at variance with the mandate of the NYDA.

Particularly, inculcating this idea that salvation ought to go beyond spirituality, but should encapsulate social and economic salvation.

Because "when the self is developed, the society will be developed". I'd like to take it a step further MMC and say: "When you develop a man, you develop an individual. But when you develop a woman, you develop society". We are intentional and deliberate when we say we want WOMEN ON TOP! Because we know the value-add that women play in society. God entrusted us to be the carriers of human life from the spiritual realm to this physical realm. Women are the only force on earth powerful enough to navigate unborn spirits into this earth. That was not by chance. Therefore, the emancipation of young women remains a priority of the NYDA.

If Jesus is the Answer, then it goes without saying that we need to be seized with critically reflecting and asking ourselves, "What kind of initiatives should be driven at the level of Government to ensure we develop ulutsha. 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? These are the questions we need practical solutions to.

This year's National Youth Day and Youth Month at the NYDA 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 address this afternoon comes against the backdrop of the serious economic and social challenges faced by the country in general, and young people in particular. 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, remains one of the foremost challenges that a democratic South Africa faces.

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.

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. But what became clear, and can attest, is the passion the board has in ensuring 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.

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.

Young people are the lifeblood of this country. Our participation in the mainstream economy ought to be the responsibility of all stakeholders, churches included.

I wish to end off my remarks today by stating that the creation of youth economic development encapsulates the core mission of the church, that which is "Developing holistic quality of life". The NYDA is one such machinery that can assist in the mission of the church. As young people, we need to divorce ourselves from the notion that solutions to our problems lie somewhere far detached from us. Platforms of this nature should not be undermined, but should serve as platforms wherein solution-driven ideas should be deposited.

In another organisation I'm a member of, economic policies that shape the trajectory of Government programmes were formed in gatherings of this nature. We know the revolutionary role that the church played in ushering the first phase of our democracy.

We are now talking about the second phase: economic emancipation! We must equally take ownership of this programme of action and not relegate it to the few individuals who assume to be the sole vanguards of the programme of economic freedom.

In closing, I wish to end off my remarks by quoting the words of revolutionary Frantz Fanon who said, and I quote: "Each generation must, out of relative obscurity, discover its mission, fulfill it or betray it". I wish to make a clarion call to all young people to take up the opportunities made available by our Government and ensure the realisation of Economic Freedom NOW is achieved

and not left as meaningless rhetoric.

I thank you.