

**THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS, MR NTOPILE KGANYAGO,  
MP, ADDRESSES YOUTH ON THE OCCASION OF THE COMMEMORATION  
OF 30<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF JUNE 16**

**VENUE: CAPE TOWN UNIVERSITY, WESTERN CAPE**

**DATE: 16 JUNE 2006**

Salutations

Throughout our history we have experienced revolutions which would come, shake the establishment and produces a different world-order. In modern history the English were the first ones in the seventeenth century to chop-off the head of King Charles and effectively weakened the stronghold of the monarch. The Americans and the French followed in later centuries and both the old and the new worlds would never be the same, instead basis had been laid for the international relations as we understand them today.

In South Africa the expansion of the colonial territorial borders and the subsequent wars of resistance planted the seeds of African unity and created heroes whose deeds and memories became catalysts of change in the unfolding of the modern South African history. Notably leaders such as Aumtshamoana, Hintsa, Makana, Shaka, Cetshwayo, Moshoeshe, Mzilikazi, Sekhukhune and Magoba, to name a few, became legends whose heroic prowess would manifest

themselves in the turbulent 1950's through to 1990's as successive generations of freedom fighters sacrificed everything to overthrow colonialism and apartheid. The Youth of 1976, realizing that the oppressive apartheid regime had sealed shut all avenues of peaceful negotiations for the harmonious co-existence of various peoples, threw caution to the wind and gave up their studies, education and lives to destabilize one of the worst systems of government in human history. The South African white minority apartheid regime would never recover from the effects of 1976 and their aftermaths.

Asked if he thought he had the might and the capacity to overthrow the Czar Regime of pre-revolutionary Russia, Lenin was quoted as having replied thus: "The regime is like a rotten wall, and just one kick, it will collapse". So it became with the apartheid South Africa.

As much as the twentieth century saw the rise of youth power, the twenty-first century yearns for the consolidation of that power so that our youth, imbued with vigor and ambition, could lead the new wave of revolution – this time to reconstruct, develop and sustain the new way of life.

In many ways the year 1994 was a cultural rupture. The period completely reorganized the social, political, moral and economic outlook of South Africa and thrust the country and its people into a global whirlwind. The opening world meant that the country should seize opportunities for new developments

meanwhile still battling backlogs and other bottlenecks created by poor social planning and inequitable financial allocations of apartheid.

Today twelve years into a democracy, South Africa stands on the edge of hope and prosperity, yet many of our youth continue to be part of the challenge, instead of the solution. Many fighting spirits had been substituted by despair, and despite the gains of our freedom, many of our youth remain shackled and unable to contribute to the development and transformation agendas of the country.

My call to the youth today is to take the first step, i.e., make the first move to break the circle of despair. Government has put in place programmes designed among others to benefit the youth. Chief among those are the Umsobomvu Youth Fund, the Expanded Public Works Programme and the National Youth Commission.

Umsobomvu Youth Fund is a government agency established in January 2001 to create a platform for skills development and job creation for South African Youth. Part of their activities include providing information for the youth concerning business careers, training, community development and health issues. They have sub-programmes such as providing learning and new skills, career planning, training, life skills and graduate placements. This is an initiative that requires business acumen coupled with fierce risk taking in order to make our youth the apprentices for future entrepreneurship and job-creators. The

Information Resource Centre at the Imbizo Media Centre at 120 Plein Street, Cape Town, will have the literature and contact details for the above programme.

On the other hand, the Expanded Public Works Programme has as its goal, the creation of one million job opportunities and concomitant development of skills by 2009. The EPWP is one of many interventions by government to eradicate poverty by using government resources to encourage the employment of labour-intensive methods and other technologies in the procurement of goods and services. The successful implementation of the EPWP will not only create jobs and develop skills. Its legacy will also be manifested in the improved delivery of essential services which are critical to the betterment of people's lives.

By the beginning of 2006, the EPWP had created more than 300 000 job opportunities since its inception in May 2004. The Economic Sector of the programme had more youth opportunities, with 50% of those going to youth, followed by the Environmental sector at 43%, the Infrastructure sector at 36% and lastly the Social sector at 23%. It is important to note that the EPWP's Economic Sector, which aims to assist at least 3000 sustainable businesses by 2009, is the engine power providing economic growth because the emphasis is on training youth to become job-givers instead of job-seekers. Through its venture learnership programme, the Economic Sector has implemented a total of 170 learnerships mainly in Limpopo and Eastern Cape. The learnership programme runs for a maximum of 24 months and comprises both classroom

and practical components with the former emphasizing business and management skills while the latter consists of contracts that are awarded to learners for successful execution with the assistance of mentors appointed solely for that purpose.

In the infrastructure sector, the Vukuphile Contractor Learnership programme is also showing signs of early success with more than 2 100 learnerships already implemented with the help of the Construction SETA and the Department of Labour. At the end of their learnerships, the contractors and their supervisors graduate with a National Qualification Framework-registered qualification and an experience and expertise which enable graduates to successfully tender for the labour-intensive projects commissioned by the provinces and municipalities, on an ongoing basis.

By no means the least important, the Social Sector has been identified by the Cabinet as having potential to create additional sustainable job opportunities. The harmonization of the Home and Community Based Care Workers has been finalized by the Departments of Health and Social Development and the learning materials have been published. Both the Umsobomvu Youth Fund and the Department of Health are funding this programme which forms part of the National Youth Service piloted in conjunction with the National Youth Commission. More than 600 youths are expected to benefit from this initiative

which is already underway in the provinces of Limpopo, Free State, and the Western Cape.

Talking about the National Youth Commission, they have published a programme of events and other activities as part of the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary and the commemoration of the Soweto uprisings. Under the title: **Age of Hope, Deepening Youth Participation in Development**, the National Youth Commission has identified, among others, the need to review the National Youth Policy as endorsed by Cabinet in November 2005. A proposed National Youth Policy Review Convention will “intricately assess the impact of youth development initiatives and institutions on the lives of young South Africans”. The convention, we are told, will also propose the merger of the functions of the National Youth Commission and Umsobomvu Youth Fund to form a Youth Development Agency. Continuing with the programme of activities, the National Youth Commission will also look at the role of youth in the contexts of both Accelerated Shared Growth Initiative of South Africa (ASGISA) as well as New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD).

ASGISA has identified Arts and Culture industry as one of those with potential to expand and create more opportunities for development and growth. The role of our youth in Arts and Culture in general but music industry in particular, is well documented. Our challenge is to encourage more and more Sean Puff Daddys i.e. young musicians who cannot only sing but can be groomed to become

producers, managers and entrepreneurs. Artists like Arthur Mafokate, Tshepho Nzimande and Joe Nina have already shown that the will and the potential are there. We need to institutionalize these through the creation of Arts, Sports and Cultural Academies that will also have a strong academic component, to see to it that our popstars and other idols grow to become not only accomplished artists and performers but successful business people as well. The husband and wife team of Zam and Nkhensani of Mojo fame on SABC 1, is another encouraging case study. The list is endless and can be made to focus on sport, stage, film – in fact on the entire entertainment industry.

The struggle of our youth and the efforts of our government to make necessary interventions is not an isolated phenomenon. Internationally countries and other organizations are at work to ensure sustainable leadership succession by looking at creating ways to mould the youth for their concrete participation and contribution to the society. The World Youth Foundation is an international non-governmental organization which was launched in 1994 to promote research, development and documentation of youth programmes beneficial to youths worldwide. Based in Malaysia, the Foundation provides a platform for the interchange of ideas among youth organizations internationally and has had seminars organized focusing on areas such as population development, HIV/Aids, human rights, education, environment, globalization and many other topics. They are supported by government but works in conjunction also with other international agencies and world organizations, including the United

Nations. Perhaps it would also be highly recommendable to the National Youth Commission to look at ways to reach out and engage with similar institutions, particularly those whose stated objective is to further the educational, cultural, and socio economic development of youth at national and international level.

In conclusion, let me share with you two or three excerpts taken from the book entitled: **Our Time is Now: Young People Changing the World**. The book tells stories of more than thirty young people in over twenty countries including African Countries who are taking action to contribute to their local and global communities. There are young people from Kenya and Nigeria who are taking action in the fight against HIV/Aids. One Afganistani young woman, a 25-year old Sadiqa Basiri, upon realizing high levels of illiteracy among girls and women in her country, has established four schools that are teaching nearly 1100 girls to read and write for the first time. The other is Muhamed Mesic from Bosnia - Herzegovina who after having realized the destruction brought by armed conflict in his country, has, at the age of 20, being elected into the City Council at his hometown of Tuzla. Asked why he chose politics, his answer was: "As youth we are raising our hands to fight the enemies of the future" and these he identified as poverty, hatred, violence and ethnic intolerance.

Let us take a leaf from these examples and mobilize ourselves to plan a meaningful role in our lives and the life of our nation. Thank You.



