



public works

Department:
Public Works
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

YOUTH CAREER EXPO

**WATERBERG DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY,
LIMPOPO PROVINCE**

**KHABELE SCHOOL SPORTS GROUND
BELA-BELA TOWNSHIP**

20 JULY 2016

Address by:

T.W. Nxesi MP, Minister of Public Works

- Programme Director
- The Premier of Limpopo, Mr Mathabatha
- Dr Nzimande, Minister of Higher Education and Training
- MECs:
 - Mr Ndou, Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure
 - Mr Kgetjepe, Education
- Mr Monyemoratho, MPL
- Cllr Mogotlane, Executive Mayor: Waterberg
- Cllr Nhlapo, Mayor: Bela-Bela
- Cllr Sebatjane, Mayor: Mogalakwena
- Cllr Maeko, Mayor: Lephalale
- Cllr Mosito Mayor: Thabazimbi
- Mr Ramukumba, CEO of the NYDA
- DGs – of the Departments of Public Works, Higher Education and Training, and Science and Technology – as well as all government officials, national, provincial and local

- Representatives of the PICC, employers and education and training institutions
- Ladies and gentlemen, and in particular learners and youth – after all, this important event is really about you.

What could be more important than the youth of our country – facing many challenges – and what could be more important than initiatives such as this – designed to motivate the youth, and to inform them as to the opportunities that exist in employment, education and training.

June 16: Youth Month

It is also appropriate that we are holding this event so soon after Youth Month – when traditionally we come together to remember the heroes of June 16, 1976 and say thank you to those who laid down their lives so that we might know freedom.

The Youth of today face different challenges, pressures and temptations – which they often face alone. The Youth of 1976 drew strength from a sense of solidarity and community born out of our common oppression, organisation and a shared vision of a better world for which we were fighting. Who can forget the spirit of those mass protests of the 1970s and 1980s – spurred on by a sense that history was on our side.

Thankfully our children will never face the brutal oppression of apartheid again, but maybe they have missed out on the sense of purpose and community that the older generation experienced in the struggle for freedom. I am saying the Youth need our support – and they need to see the opportunities that exist for them today and that these are things worth striving for.

Speaking on June 16th, last year, President Zuma pointed to the new challenges facing the Youth of South Africa - the triple challenges of poverty,

inequality and unemployment. He went on to say that:
“To tackle these challenges successfully, you must empower yourselves through education.”

This is why Education is the single biggest item in government spending.

You have also heard from Mr Chuene from the PICC about government’s economic strategy to invest in infrastructure – electricity, water, transport etc – to unlock local economic development and drive job creation. You have heard about SIP 1: *‘Unlocking the Northern Mineral Belt with Waterberg as a catalyst’* – and that this area will be a hub for massive mining and economic development. This will then stimulate other industries – such as agriculture and tourism – and create thousands of jobs. There will also be growing demand for skilled labour. So education and training is going to be very important.

So the future in this area is bright.

But, right now, we know that the Youth is bearing the brunt of high levels of unemployment. This is the result of deep-rooted structural weaknesses in the economy – made worse by the international economic crisis following the financial crash of 2008. So we have to take action now to address this challenge. Government has responded with a number of initiatives:

- Incentives for businesses to employ young people.
- We are also encouraging young people to become entrepreneurs. The Industrial Development Corporation in partnership with the NYDA and the Small Enterprise Finance Agency (SEFA) have ring-fenced 2,7 billion rand over the next five years for young people to take up opportunities in business.
- As well as providing finance and training, government supports young entrepreneurs through a mentorship programme – where they can be guided and advised by established entrepreneurs.

- The National Rural Youth Service Corps (NARYSEC) provides skills in fields such as construction and agriculture.
- The successful Expanded Public Works Programme also provides opportunities of training and short-term employment for young people.
- Government departments are also providing various training and development programmes that they offer nationally and provincially, as well as in municipalities throughout the country.

The opportunities are there – take them

The President closed his June 16th speech last year with these words:

“Our message to young people today is that every young person must take responsibility for their own

development and for the path towards economic freedom.

While government and business can provide the opportunities, young people themselves must take the initiative to develop themselves and those around them.”

Above all else today, that is the point that I want to make: the opportunities are there – where once, as black youth, you were excluded – now the doors of education and training have been opened – but you must walk through those doors of learning – and that means discipline and commitment to study and to work for your goals.

We live in a fast-changing world – what is referred to as the ‘information age’. I am sure that many of the youth here know more than I do about new information and communication technology – so you already have a head start. But it is not enough. Today you also need

education and skills if you are going to succeed in the wider economy and labour market.

Let me tell you what I know – let me speak about the training and employment opportunities we have established in the Department of Public Works.

Let me begin with the EPWP (Expanded Public Works Programme). Government is committed to creating 6 million work opportunities between 2014 and 2019 – with increased focus on youth and training. These work opportunities are created by public bodies across the three spheres of government – national, provincial and municipal.

Let me give practical examples of the training offered:

- The National Youth Service, part of EPWP Infrastructure is currently training 3,600 young people as artisans in trades like carpentry, building and plumbing.

- In the Environment and Culture sector we have a number of programmes addressing skills shortages in the tourism and hospitality industry:
 - To date, 1,760 unemployed youth were enrolled in the Chefs Training Programme – some of the graduates are now working overseas, others have started their own businesses;
 - In 2014-15, 3,434 unemployed youth passed through the Tourism Training Programme. Graduates of this programme have a high subsequent employment rate in the tourism industry.
 - The Working on Fire Programme to train Fire Fighters.

- In the EPWP Social Sector there are a number of training programmes for: Early Childhood Development practitioners; teaching assistants; Home Community Based Carers; Primary Health

Counsellors; Youth Workers; Pharmacy and Nursing Assistants; and Sports Administrators.

As I said, I will talk of that which I know. Public Works was faced with a major challenge: it is a highly technical department – but lacked many of the technical skills needed to operate in the construction and property environment.

So as part of our Turnaround Plan we decided to grow our own technical capacity. Public Works now has active schools, bursary, candidacy, internship and artisan programmes with over 1,000 participants.

Another challenge was the Department's poor financial management resulting in negative audit findings. As part of a programme to address this, the Department employed over 100 unemployed commerce graduates – working under qualified supervision – to go out to all the regions to work on audit problems. I am pleased to say that over half of those unemployed graduates were

offered employment in the private sector, the rest remaining with Public Works.

In 2015, the Department trained 120 youths in KZN and Mpumalanga to operate water treatment services. Currently a further 320 unemployed chemical engineering graduates are receiving training and will be appointed to 97 water facilities across the country.

Other programmes include the following

- Providing assistance to students from FET and Higher Education Institutions with workplace experiential training and internships to meet the requirements of their qualifications enabling them to become employable;
- Learnerships - which offer unemployed matriculants a training opportunity whilst also giving them access to employment opportunities. Areas of training include:

- Office Administration
 - Public Sector Accounting
 - Customer Management
 - Information Technology
 - General Security Services
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- Technical Internships in the engineering and construction fields as well as internships in support services such as Communications, Public Relations, Human Resource Management, Office Administration etc.
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- Artisan Trainee Programme - including: Electrical, Mechanical, Plumbing, Carpentry, Bricklaying, Fitter and Turner, and Boiler Maker
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- The Young Professionals /Candidacy Programme - is aimed at creating a flow of professionals into the construction and property sectors. Upon completion and attainment of Professional registration, these candidates are absorbed into permanent posts.

I was speaking about what I know in Public Works – but there are many other Departments and services, as well as the private sector – all require skilled and motivated employees.

My message to you is: Find out what is available; find out what you are interested in; work and study hard – and you will get there.

Let me conclude with a quotation from the Bible:

Proverbs chapter 16, verse 16:

"How much better is it to get wisdom than gold! And to get understanding rather ... than silver!"

That has certainly been my experience in life: education and study bring knowledge and understanding – and hopefully the beginnings of wisdom. An education will also provide you with a

livelihood and the means to acquire the things you need to live.

By the way, the Bible has a lot more to say about Youth – mostly about obeying and honouring your parents and elders – which is good advice if you want to stay out of trouble. But the Bible also defends the Youth. Quoting from 1 *Timothy* chapter 4, verse 12:

“Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers - in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity.”

So the Bible is saying ‘As Youth, you have rights – don’t let anyone look down on you’, but also the Bible implies that: ‘as Youth, you also have responsibilities – and you will earn respect by your conduct and your behaviour.’

Let me end on a serious note. I am very aware of the many pressures that are brought to bear on our young

people – and I am aware that young people sometimes succumb to temptation. I want to say to young people that if you do get into some kind of trouble, it is not the end of the world. There are people who can help you – no matter how big the problem seems to you. Speak to someone about it: a parent, a family member or friend, your pastor, a teacher, a counsellor – but don't bottle it up inside.

And I will end by giving the same advice to parents – communicate with your children. If they seem to behave badly, at one level it is a cry for help. Answer that cry. Above all else, don't burn your bridges with your children. Encourage them and remind them, that if they can get past the immediate problem that seems insurmountable at the time, then there is a world of opportunity out there, and that you are there – by their side – to help them.

Thank you.