



SEKHUKHUNE
District Municipality

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Office of the Executive Mayor

ADDRESS BY EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF SEKHUKHUNE DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY CLLR JULIA LATA MATHEBE ON THE OCASSION OF THE YOUTH JOBS & BUSINESS SUPPORT OPPORTUNITIES EXPO ON FRIDAY, 28 OCTOBER 2022 AGRICULTURAL HALL (GROBLERSDAL), ELIAS MOTSOLEDI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY.

Programme director – facilitator

Members of the Mayoral Committee Present,

Mayor of Elias Motsoaledi Local Municipality

All councillors present here,

Exhibitors and presenters,

All youth formations,

Friends from the media,

Ladies and gentlemen

Good morning

Thobela!!

Programme director,

Let me begin by outlining that October in terms of government calendar **represents older persons, breast cancer awareness and transportation month**. It is against this background that Sekhukhune district municipality together with the **Office of the Premier** celebrated international older persons at **Mpheleng Village, Elias Motsoaledi Local Municipality** on the 1st of this month. The theme for this year is **“Resilience of older persons in a changing world”**, the objective here is to heighten awareness about the rights of the elderly persons and to encourage communities to aid and protect elderly persons.

But Programme director

We are also celebrating **Breast cancer awareness** this month. **Breast cancer** is everyone’s responsibility, not only women. Even though it is prominent amongst women. We call upon all women and men to go for check – ups as we fight to reduce the scourge of breast cancer in our society. **We support the fighters, admire the survivors, and honour the taken.**

Programme director

October is also an important calendar month as we also celebrate one of the most outstanding South African who had dedicated his entire life to fight an evil and unjust system. **We celebrate the longest serving ANC President Comrade Oliver Reginald Tambo**. As we meet here today to deal with the challenges of poverty and unemployment facing the youth of our country, we draw strength and wisdom from his wise and wide teachings when he said, and I quote **“The children of any nation are its future. A country, a movement, a person that does not value its youth and children does not deserve its future”** end quote.

It is against the above-mentioned words that I am delighted and honoured to be here today at the Youth Jobs & Business Support Opportunities Expo to grace the exposure of the youth development agenda to pave a bright future for our country.

Programme director

Statistics South Africa recently released unemployment figures which showed unemployment, as per the expanded definition, sitting at the highest among those aged 15 to 24 years at 63.9% and 25 to 34 years at 42.1%.

According to Stats SA, unemployment dominates those without post matric qualification. A total of 3.8 million out of 10.2 million people aged 15 to 24 years were not in employment, education, or training.

This background can indeed be the problem statement for expos such as this as it paints a very scary picture on the current situation. We need to start commissioning a deep analysis on whether we are doing enough to fight the sketch of unemployment.

In no more than five sentences one immediately admits that as a country we need to do more.

We should be more discouraged by the faces attached to these numbers because if young people are getting economically excluded this much then the future, we aspire for is in danger.

We get discouraged and frustrated when the efforts, ideas and plans do not meet targets according to milestones and other measures we set ourselves.

For an example:

- **The National Development Plan (NDP)** sets an unemployment goal of 14 per cent by 2020 and a labour force participation rate of just over 60% by 2020.
 - NDP further suggests that the economy should be close to reaching full employment with 11 million more jobs having been created by 2030.
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- To achieve this, the economy should be growing at 5.4% per annum.

On the contrary, the economy has recorded just less than 2% in the first quarter of 2022.; which therefore implies that the economic growth has reached a stagnant point and remains a prime challenge to employment and growth with pressure mounted from the labour market, unable to absorb new entrants in the market.

Programme director

Now we must drive this point home because our district contributes numbers and faces to the stats I have just mentioned.

In our district Sekhukhune, we are sitting with 50,9% unemployment rate of which 60,6% is youth. There is a clear suspicion that these numbers are under rated from the observation analysis point of view. Many young people are exposed to the street and pose a threat to the future of the district, province, and South Africa at large.

But we cannot afford to be cry-babies anymore! We need to put our shoulder to the wheel and do something about the situation facing the youth of our country and our district in particular. We know it better that

- **“Covid-19 pandemic has worsened the situation which has negatively affected the welfare of our youth that are seemingly not included in the mainstream economy. And as a result, young people are seriously exposed to economic exclusion!”**

The reality is that we will constantly be faced with new social pressures and challenges emanating from the influences of **globalization, increasing human migration, economic down-turn, pandemics etc.** We need to be in control of our economy and resist allowing exogenous factors. The African problem needs to be solved by Africans, given its diverse cultured environment. In one of the most prolific messages from **the Nelson Mandela centenary lecture, Prof Lumumba said, “Madiba would have asked why African countries produce what they do not consume and consume what we do not produce”**. He pointed out a few examples around that most African countries exported important mineral raw materials as well as coffee, tea but in return we import expensive, high-valued finished products derived from the very same products we exported.

Programme director

So, in an era where we have little situational capacity choices, the choice is to strengthen both what we already have and create. We need to be jealous about what we possess as African countries.

As leaders we are literally led to a constant review of how our surroundings can better cope with the challenges.

One such review is the increment to inclusivity. Because inclusivity at the Local Level can best respond to local needs.

It could provide alternative, practical, and essential tools to enhance local economic development, which in turn presents more ideas, options, resources, and methods for accessing and sourcing new and feasible economic settings.

Programme director,

Hence therefore, **the Limpopo Provincial Government in Partnership with the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy held a - mining Energy & Industrialisation Investment Conference.** What is important to communicate is the acquisition of **Bokoni Platinum Mine** by **African Rainbow Minerals.** I deliberately mention this acquisition because it is of great importance to our district and will soon yield great business and employment especially for the **youth, women, and people with disabilities.** We recently held a high-level meeting in my office with the management of **African Rainbow Minerals and in their take – over of Bokoni Platinum Mine,** they will heavily invest in the mine which in turn will employ around **2500 people and open direct business and entrepreneurial opportunities to around 5000 people within our district.**

Let it be known that the whole district and its citizens will benefit, not only people from Feta Kgomo Tubatse municipal area.

Programme director

While we on the same subject, let me be clear on this matter; The Fetakgomo – **Tubatse Special Economic Zone (SEZ),** which is a growth engine earmarked to **catalyse economic activity** in pursuance of government's strategic objectives of **industrialisation, regional development and employment creation has an investment potential valued at R45 billion,** and some of the infrastructural benefits that will

accrue from the SEZ include **Information Communication Technology, roads network, bulk water service and industrialisation hub** will benefit the entire Sekhukhune district and Not only Fetakgomo – Tubatse areas!!! Yes, even you that are present in this expo today will benefit!!! Opportunities will be there for your perusal; it is only a matter of seizing them.

It is also safe to mention that through our various interventions – **Bulk water Projects, reticulation, and support to SMMEs as the district municipality in the financial year under review we have created over 5273 job opportunities and a greater percentage of that was to youth, women, and people with disabilities.**

We have recently, in partnership with various stakeholders and the **Sekhukhune Development Agency, launched – The Sekhukhune Tourism Association.** This will help galvanise tourism opportunities in our district and attract visitors especially throughout the festive season, as **Sekhukhune is a gateway into other notable countries like Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Swaziland.**

Programme director

It is against this background that we are here today to deal with these challenges facing our youth in the district. We want to revive the youth **spirit toward some of life's crucial activities... which are growth-oriented and opportunity-driven young entrepreneurs; to transition into productive business, expand and create additional jobs that provide productive employment, wage, and decent work opportunities.**

It is worth mentioning that by recognising the fact that if **young people's innovative abilities, skills, energy, contemporary knowledge, and**

expertise are well harnessed, we can all be lifted out of the persisting triple challenges of poverty, unemployment, and inequality.

That through young energy and zeal we may end the plight for job creation but instead have job creators.

The rest of us must provide guidance and an enabling environment to continue helping them; we must coordinate their drive from above. We therefore need to capacitate our Youth officers to be able to drive this machinery and link their programme such as this one with those directly affected. These offices need to be at the centre of the strategic decision-making processes and enrich their mandate.

Programme director

It is high time that we view what we plan and practice in a new light. So, I am informed to dwell much on what youth and communities must bring to the table... which are more innovative and feasible ideas.

Supporting young people to develop productive business models is critical for their own business survival. We need a careful approach to encourage self-employment in market segments with growth potential and unsatisfied demand for goods and services.

Some of our stakeholders know well what can be done in this regard! They may have specific stimulus offers that may encourage economic activities at ground level; and thereby involving the innovative abilities of young people.

Entrepreneurship interventions, including access to finance, appear to be most effective if they tackle specific limitations of young people in business and job creation.

We may speak as much as we like but **insufficient financial resources and market competition** are the most limiting issues reported by those who prefer self-employment.

To reach the level of scale needed to resolve the youth employment challenge, **the ownership and involvement of national and local actors are essential; especially if you look at certain regions of our province Limpopo.**

As we sit here let's get preoccupied with fresh ideas on how to tackle the issues of **financing and markets for small business development.**

The role of innovative financing in sharing the risk of supporting youth entrepreneurship and self-employment among stakeholder actors should be further explored.

In collaboration with our key stakeholders, we need to weigh in and throw dedicated mechanisms to support disadvantaged youth, including young persons with disabilities and youth in fragile situations

Programme director

Now and then we talk about the issues of **gender parity**. Few times we see a tiny link between **entrepreneurship and young women.**

Dedicated entrepreneurship programmes can stimulate change in gender relations, yet they need to be considered as part of an overall ecosystem surrounding young women in their efforts to start or expand a business.

We can improve more if we start doing impact **assessment of business, vocational, life skills training and empowerment intervention for young women in rural areas or regions like ours.**

We need to revisit our local communities in understanding their labour market, economic aspirations, and the levels of business knowledge of young women.

Of course, not only to take stock of situations or do statistics but mainly to devise revised policy mechanisms on youth development in general. Our 3-year Youth Policy has lapsed, and we are in a process to review as we also embarked on a Consultative workshop in the past weeks. The purpose was to get your inputs and drive a way forward to develop and approve a progressive youth policy with key impact deliverables.

Programme director

Here comes a critical point in the whole equation for collaboration:

What do young people know or are prepared to know? Is it still an old fashion servant-mentality being groomed in them... or are they empowered enough to know that they can be creators of hope for others?

Do we still teach or train our young people for work... or we have started implanting seeds of innovation and creativity?

My life theme will always be based on such questions whenever we discuss youth issues.

I say this because the future has never been this different.

Cutting edge technology brought with it sweeping forces that are reshaping the skills and work landscape where many are forced to bite the dust.

Now more than ever we are required to rethink and guide our youth on development, work attraction and work security.

Programme director

Apartheid and colonialism tried to be second nature in our lives, but our human spirit was bigger than that... These two were defied and defeated.

But now the human brain is something else...

It's a second nature from spirituality. So, it is going to be impossible to defy or defeat innovation and creativity or technology in other words.

The future of any young generation is now in the hands of what they think they can create... for the better benefit of society of-course.

Programme director

I'd like to conclude in summary that-

While struggling and striving to intervene and execute policy on the ground to benefit our youth let us work hard at transforming relevant institutions so that they match the needs of current and future generations; in preparation and while seeking to effectively utilize the outcomes.

We have invited various stakeholders to come and make presentations to you as youth and together address the challenges that you are facing such as funding, support to your business etc.

As we can observe, stakeholder is so much available here today and therefore I have no doubt that working together, we can take Sekhukhune district forward. Let me conclude by quoting the 49th USA President, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt when he says and I quote, “ **We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future**”

I thank you.

