



SEKHUKHUNE
District Municipality

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OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE MAYOR

[PROTOCOL]

Programme Director

Good morning!

Thobela!

Programme Director,

2022 Youth Month marks 46 years since the 1976 student uprising.

It was on the 16th of June 1976 were young people of that pulled period successfully initiated and mobilized a powerful defiance against the apartheid education policy that had sought to impose Afrikaans as medium of instruction in the classrooms.

June 16 stands out in the annals of the country as an epoch-making moment that heralded a new path for the country, leading to the 1994 democratic dispensation. 1976 youth played a historic significant role by depicting a decisive action of waging in the struggle for a liberated South Africa. 1976 generation also carries out memories of the brutal apartheid regime to date. However, they stood up armless and challenged the regime with an absolute interest in fighting for their future.

Programme Director,

We pay tribute to leaders of the 1976 uprising: Kgotso Seathlolo, Tsietsi Mashinini, Edwin Mabitsi, Dan Montsitsi, Murphy Morobe, and many others. In the same spirit, how can we forget other prominent leaders of the same generation such as Onkgopotse Tiro, Steve Biko, Ephraim Mogale, the founding president of COSAS in 1979. The fighting spirit of young freedom fighters was fueled by long serving president of the governing party African National Congress, Oliver Tambo when he gave the title of Young Lions to the generation of the 1980s for their similar effort and energy swelling to fight the ignoble regime of apartheid. President Tambo referred to Parks Mankahlana, Peter Mokaba, Ephraim Nkoe, Sipiwe Mthimkhulu, Frans Mohlala,

Ncumiso Kondlo, Bachana Mokoena, Rapu Molekane, Stanza Bopape and others who epitomised the great spirit of Young Lions through great leadership.

Programme Director,

Despite various challenges faced by our democracy, we call all youth of today to be inspired by similar fighting spirit of the past from these leaders. The political consciousness and activism must continue to place our youth at the center of national-building and enrich the gains of political freedom with economic freedom. The future of our nation solely depends on the youth of the country, we then not only wish them to enjoy youth month but to wish them to have young and new brains and minds to transform the nation towards great economic and social elevations. It is the duty of the youth to define their own future and be responsible for their self-end.

Theme of 2022 Youth Month: “Promoting Sustainable Livelihood and Resilience of Young People for a Better Tomorrow”.

It is therefore important to note that youth month celebration is incomplete if we do not work towards sustaining and making the lives of our youth better. Equally, our youth needs to stay focused in life and be able to work towards the progress of National Youth Development objectives.

Programme Director,

It is for this reason we are here to expose youth to opportunities related to the Minerals and Energy sector of our economy. This was in response to a national call by President Cyril Matamela Ramaphosa to work on the recovery of our social economic mechanisms post covid-19 pandemic.

You may recall that government of the Republic of South Africa declared a national state of disaster under Section 27(1) and Section 27(2) of the Disaster Management Act on 15 March 2020 in response to the Coronavirus pandemic, President Ramaphosa announced first hard lockdown on 23 March 2020 which started on 26 March 2020.

The spread of Covid-19 pandemic became a global health and economic crisis, and most economies were severely affected. The pandemic reduced economic activities and performances due to hard lockdowns. The national lockdown has severely reduced economic growth at national, provincial and the local level. Recovery of the economy depended on the pathway of the pandemic and medical developments in the coming months and years.

According to the 2021 National Treasury Budget Review, the government's support to economic recovery and reforms, real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is expected to grow at 3.3 per cent in 2021 and 2.2 per cent in 2022. The budget deficit was also revised from 10 percent to 14 percent of GDP due to fiscal economic pressures of the pandemic. On the other hand, the South African Reserve Bank (SARB) expects national GDP in 2020 to contract by 8.2%, compared to the earlier forecast of 0.2%. The economy will however recover and grow by 2.2% and 2.7% in 2021 and 2022 respectively.

Programme Director,

President Ramaphosa in his state of the nation address, decided to extend the unemployment relief scheme to next year march and many other social and economic reliefs to boost the economy. We have just received Gross Domestic Product (GDP) data this week that our economy has carried over its positive momentum from the previous quarter. The economy is now growing faster than it was expected and recovering to pre-pandemic levels. Official data from Statistics SA recently showed 1.9% growth in GDP, which is on average of 2% less than expected during the 2021 Budget Review.

Among other youth development priority list initiated and meant to benefit youth to accelerate pathways in the economy over the next 5 years are as follows:

- Pathways Management Networks
- Agile Workforce Development
- Inclusive Urban and Rural Markets
- Workplace Experience, and
- Presidential Youth Service

During the first five years of the programme, the following key outcomes must be achieved:

- Three million young work-seekers between the ages of 15 and 35 will have engaged in a National Pathway Management Network and accessed services to help them grow their employability and identify and pursue work opportunities,

- 1.5 million temporary, paid work opportunities will have been created (including one million work-based placements, 250 000 work-integrated learning opportunities and 250 000 service opportunities); and
- 500 000 young people will be engaged in sustainable work opportunities through workforce development programmes.

As the President has said, it is indeed essential to proceed without delay to implement this comprehensive plan.

Youth unemployment is a national crisis that cannot be postponed.

Unemployment is becoming a pandemic.

It cannot be correct that young people who are eligible to enter the labour market, are left to languish in hopelessness.

Unemployment diminishes our ability to eradicate poverty, tackle inequality and improve the lives of the working class and the poor.

Programme Director,

It must be emphasized that it is not possible for the government to employ every citizen.

However, the government has a duty to create an environment that would allow business ideas and entrepreneurship to thrive.

To this effect, the Sekhukhune District Municipality has in place, a Youth Development Strategy that is guided by both Sekhukhune Youth Policy and National Youth Policy.

Its purpose is to streamline and integrate all youth development programmes to create an equitable and fair society in which Sekhukhune youths enjoy full social, economic, and political rights.

The strategy is targeting underprivileged young people between the ages of 14 and 35 years.

This strategy has identified five key areas that affect youths and need comprehensive and integrated approach, namely:

- Economic Transformation, Entrepreneurship and Job Creation,
- Quality Education, Skills Development and Second Chances,

- Physical and Mental Health Promotion in the face of Covid-19,
- Social Cohesion and National Building, and
- Effective and Responsive Youth Development Machinery.

The first area aims to address lack of economic participation by youths and to encourage a drive toward youth entrepreneurship.

We encourage young people to focus on the creation of employment and move away from the job seeking mentality.

Youths must lead all efforts that seek to drive innovation.

Programme Director,

Many young people lack skills and work experience needed to find jobs and participate meaningfully in the economy.

To address this, we have entered a partnership and signed Memorandum of Understanding with various stakeholders including the National Youth Development Agency to address the issue of skills shortage in the strategic sectors of the economy.

As the municipality, we are committed to small business enterprise development. We have launched a 3-year Learner Contractor Development programme that is benefiting 52 locals who run small construction businesses.

37 of them are young people.

We assist these small businesses to acquire the required grades through practical construction work, to capacitate them to compete with established construction companies, and even beyond the borders of Sekhukhune.

For the financial year 2021/022 that starts at the end this month, the municipality has budgeted R70 Million to continue supporting this contractor learner programme.

Programme Director,

We must fully understand the role of education in the knowledge economy.

It is estimated that there will be a demand for an additional 1.7 million employees with higher education by 2030 and unless South Africa's graduate conversion rate improves, much of that demand will go unmet – resulting in a serious skills shortfall across the economy. It is paramount that we bring the worlds of education and of work closer together if we want to close the skills gap.

Our Communication on Education must take a system-wide perspective and should aim at unlocking the potential of education and training systems to support growth and jobs. This communication must argue that learning should be more flexible and relevant and stress the vital role of teachers and the impact of new technologies.

Tapping into the potential of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Mining and Energy, for the modernisation of education and training has become a key priority for everyone. Companies like Microsoft Solar, wind and hydrogen are the first to know that information and communication technologies have changed our way of working, communicating, and living.

It is high time that they had such an impact also on the world of education.

Education and business also need to engage more decisively in structured forms of cooperation which can enrich the innovation potential of organizations involved and improve the learning and teaching environments.

Programme Director,

This is what we want, to encourage our future education programmes to deliver new and innovative teaching methods and approaches, and to promote more entrepreneurial mind-sets.

These partnerships bring together partners from business and academia committed to planning to bring the same approach to the world of vocational education; TVET systems that will deliver graduates with the skills that businesses need to stay competitive.

Our goal here is to make young people of all backgrounds more employable, nurture entrepreneurship and stimulate innovation. By combining entrepreneurship education and interaction with business, students can develop the practical skills, knowledge and attitudes that allow them to innovate.

To do that, some of them must develop a love for the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics subjects, the so-called the STEM subjects.

Initiatives like the Sekhukhune TVET College's Centre for Entrepreneurship programme, focusing on empowering youth to pursue a better future are good examples of such partnerships. It is this transition from school to work that needs to be bridged, and I think that the Sekhukhune TVET College's Centre for Entrepreneurship programme is a decisive step in the right direction.

There is a lot at stake. Today, more than ever, it is education that can deliver social progress. When we invest in education, we commit ourselves to the development of our district and the future welfare of our communities.

The topic chosen for today's discussion is indeed of fundamental importance.

Programme Director,

Let me tell the narrative to our fellow young people before I go and sit down, maybe it may inspire some in this gathering.

Not far from here, a 27-year-old young man from the Nkomazi Local Municipality, in Mpumalanga, has turned plastic into fuel, to mitigate from the roaring fueling prices. Sibusiso Shabangu, from the dusty village of Malelani – just like Ga – Moretsele, Ntwane, Mmabocha, Mamphokgo and Tafelkop, cooks' plastic waste at 400 degrees Celsius heat in an airtight reactor to produce diesel, petrol, and gas. Shabangu uses the remains to make polish and candles.

With 10kg of plastic, he makes 5 litres of diesel, 2.5 litres of petrol and gas. This young man, with the same background as most of you present here, has found a way to not

only clean the environment but make a living for himself. He also hired five (5) other young people in his community in his business. This is the kind of entrepreneurship we as the district municipality are waiting to support. Entrepreneurship with a purpose to solve some of the district challenges, and at the same time create employment. Who amongst you here has the same vigor as Sibusiso? Who amongst you here has the same drive as Sibusiso? Who amongst you here has the same passion as Sibusiso? Who amongst you here has the same drive as Sibusiso?

Thank you very much to our key stakeholders, in particular the Department of Minerals and Resources, who have agreed to partner with us on this journey to assist our youth.

I Thank you.

