



## water & sanitation

Department:  
Water and Sanitation  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**ADDRESS BY Ms. NOMVULA MOKONYANE, MINISTER OF WATER AND SANITATION AT THE STEP UP 2 A START UP 2016 EVENT HELD AT THE CROWN REEF CONFERENCE CENTRE, GOLD REEF CITY, ORMONDE.**

**27 JULY, 2016**

### **SPEAKING NOTES:**

#### **PREFACE:**

- As we are gathered here, we should not forget that we have just celebrated 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Soweto June 16 uprising that spread across the length and breadth of our country. The event, itself, epitomised the resilience and tenacity of the youth of our country in confronting the brutal system of apartheid.
- One such young person was Solomon Kalushi Mahlangu, a cadre of Umkhonto we Sizwe who was prepared to fight and die for democracy which we all enjoy today. There are many other youths who paid the supreme price for a democratic, non-racial and non-sexist South Africa with their own lives.
- Today, as we speak, there is a book launch in Mamelodi, at the Solomon Mahlangu Square in Mamelodi. The book written by struggle stalwart and activist Priscilla Jana is entitled **“FIGHTING FOR MANDELA.”**



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- I had to mention the story of Solomon Mahlangu to emphasize the point that we can never take for granted this hard won democracy. And that it is important to exercise our democratic right to out and vote for the party of our choice on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of August.

### YOUTH CHALLENGES:

- The greatest number of people living in the world today is young and youthful. In South Africa, with a total population of over 50 million, more than sixty percent of this number is youth. This has far-reaching implication for a young democracy as ours.
- How we ride this wave will primarily be **determined by how we plan for the future: the type of strategies and** approaches we adopt today will tell if we will sink or survive.
- However, the economic growth trajectory of our country requires that we should produce workers with requisite skills and knowledge to match the demands of this knowledge economic era we find ourselves in.
- This then begs the question: Do we have skilled and well-rounded professionals that can grow our economy? Do we have a knowledge bank or rather a committed body of knowledge generators and drivers necessary for our development and growth?



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- Are we, as young people, the type of professionals that a developing nation like ours requires?
- Do we, as a nation, have the disposition to develop entrepreneurs that can give South Africa a competitive and comparative advantage within region and the world-over.
- These are critical questions that we need to grapple with. They are kind of questions that must push us to reflect honestly about our role as young professionals in a developmental state.
- Empirical evidence points to the fact that South Africa suffer from a poverty of skilled professionals in various areas of the economy.
- Furthermore, It also shows that where we produce professionals there is a serious disjuncture between skills they have and that which the knowledge economy requires.
- Thus we sit with a high number of graduates who are unemployable because what they acquired academically falls short of what the country on a developmental trajectory requires.

### **YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF WATER AND SANITATION:**



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- The objectives of Youth Development are to provide assurance of sufficient, appropriate and adequate skills within the Water and Sanitation sector. Particularly amongst previously disadvantaged and marginalized groups.
- Youth Development aims to facilitate economic access and job opportunities to Youth, more especially unemployed Out of School Youth within identified target groups through the current Youth Development Policy Framework.
- Guiding policy documents for Youth Development are the Sustainable Development goals as follows;
  1. Goal 1: No poverty
  2. Goal 6: Clean Water and Sanitation
  3. Goal 8: Good Jobs and Economic Growth
  4. Goal10: Reduced inequalities
  5. Goal 11 Sustainable cities and Communities
- In line with these goals the National Youth Development Policy 2015-2020 further supports these goals and proposes the central role of Youth Development in every Department's operations.



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### OPPORTUNITIES PROVIDED BY THE DEPARTMENT

#### Training opportunities

- The water sector is experiencing critical scarce skills shortages particularly in engineering and sciences. This is due to both an insufficient skills base and fierce competition in the Labor market for skilled personnel.
- In addition, a high retirement figure will precipitate in huge loss in institutional memory along with strategic and operational decision-making capabilities.
- The Department of Water and Sanitation, as a sector leader, took the lead to ensure sufficient scarce skills and competencies in the short, medium and long term through the introduction of the Learning Academy.
- The objectives of the Learning Academy are to:
  - Address skills gaps in overall water supply value chain,
  - Plan and build capacity for immediate, medium, and long term needs of DWS and the broader water sector,
  - Offer workplace exposure and develop unemployed youth
  - Support the Department's Employment Equity policy
  - Support National Government's job creation initiative
  - Foster a culture of knowledge transfer.



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### **Bursaries**

- We would like to encourage the private sector to partner with the Department in supporting undergraduates (interns) who require specific practical work experience to obtain their qualification at a University of Technology or a University.
- The Department would further like to support opportunities for work experience and assistance in improving the skill-sets at the level of Local Government,
- The Department has already signed agreements with the various private sectors partners in the endeavour to assist youth in the country in accessing sustainable livelihood through acquisition of skills for employment, self-employment and further information, education and training opportunities.
- The department's Learning Academy has signed Memoranda of Understanding with most SA universities to assist with administration of Bursaries. Part of the bursary conditions are confined to external bursars for full time studies in Water and Sanitation related disciplines only.



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### **Learnerships and Internships**

- The Department of Water and Sanitation offers practical exposure as prescribed by Institutes of Higher Learning in order to complete qualification (minimal classroom environment).
- In terms of Engineering Qualifications, accredited and structured rotational exposure is provided and these training programmes are supported by Engineering Council of SA (ECSA).

### **Business opportunities/Procurement quotas**

- Minister has recently approved a BBBEE policy that will support a target of 30% procurement spend on Woman, Youth and People with disabilities.

### **Other Departmental initiatives**

- **War On Leaks** Programme: Fifteen thousand youth to be trained in various plumbing-related and artisan skills to improve water use efficiency.
- Collaborations needed with private sector to support the upskill and skilling of local government.

### **Practical actions to be taken will include:**

- Increased research on improved appropriate technology to deal with various challenges – water quality, storage, access, recycling etc.
- Financing of the various initiatives to improve water availability and quality
- Skills development and knowledge management



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- Institutional development and support

### **CONCLUSION:**

Let me make my final remark by quoting the renowned 20<sup>th</sup> century economist when he said; **"The difficulty lies not so much in developing new ideas as in escaping from the old ones"**

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