



# higher education & training

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Department:  
Higher Education and Training  
**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY THE MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING, DR BE NZIMANDE AT THE MANDELA DAY CAREER DEVELOPMENT FESTIVAL**

Programme Director: Ms Chriselda Kananda

MEC Mr P Lesufi representing the Premier

Provincial Cabinet

The Chair of Portfolio Committee: Ms. P Phosa and Members of Parliament

COSATU President: Comrade. Sdumo Dlamini

Senior Management and Officials from the Gauteng Department of Education

Executive Mayors, Mayoral Committee Members and Councillors from various Municipalities

Alliance Leadership

Senior Management and Officials from all spheres of Government

Council Members, VC and Management from Universities and TVET Colleges

Board Members and Management from SETAs, SAQA and NSFAS

Ladies and Gentlemen

Comrades, Members of Media

And most of all, our learners, teachers and principals from schools

Good morning

As the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) we are delighted to again offer this year's Mandela Day Career Development Festival, which is aimed at empowering our youth to make informed career choices, to assist them to go into post school education and training opportunities and ultimately to contribute to the economy of our beautiful country. This is one of my flagship projects - that have already taken place in four provinces - the first was held in 2010 in Giyani, Limpopo, the second in Lusikisiki in 2011 in the Eastern Cape, the third in Taung in 2012 in the North West, and the fourth in 2013 in Qwa-Qwa, Free State where over 6000 learners from local communities and surrounding schools and TVET colleges joined us. It is an annual event, targeting rural and disadvantaged

areas with the aim of actively directing young people towards becoming central to the envisaged skilled and capable workforce that supports an inclusive growth path in the country.

Our aim for participating on this day, in honour of a great leader, is to create opportunities for all learners, particularly those from impoverished schools, to access institutions of post school education and training by providing career guidance related to career choices, so that accessing and getting quality education and training, may become a reality for them as well.

When the DHET was established in 2009, one of the areas to which we paid particular attention was the building, prioritising and institutionalising of career guidance programmes for our students.

The launch of the White Paper for Post-School Education and Training on 16 January 2014 is a major milestone, demonstrating our serious commitment to post school education and training and our efforts to

increase access to and expand opportunities in the post-school sector. The White paper guides our institutions in the sector to bring about a single, coherent, highly articulated and diverse post-school education and training system, emphasising vocational training, with all sub-sectors and institutions playing their unique role.

The aim of the White Paper is to create a framework that defines post school education and training focus and priorities and that enables it to shape its strategies and plans for the future. It sets out policies to guide the DHET and the institutions for which it is responsible in order to contribute to building a developmental state with a vibrant democracy and flourishing economy. I urge all of us to read the new White Paper and familiarise ourselves with its content in order to understand the nuances of our post-school sector.

The White Paper emphasises the crucial role of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) that combines academic and workplace

learning. It sets out our strategies for transforming it further and ensuring that it leads to a brighter future for students and for the country. This new policy will strengthen and expand the public colleges, enabling them to attract a large proportion of school leavers and become institutions of choice. This message is starting to bear fruit as nowadays growing numbers of young people study at TVET colleges. Let me illustrate this: Over the 2013 Medium Term Expenditure Framework period, we allocated R17.4 billion to ensure that TVET College enrolments increase. This includes investment in TVET college infrastructure in order to turn college campuses into learning, information communication and technology, sports, entertainment and business incubation centres. We have already seen a significant increase in TVET enrolments over the past years from 348 000 in 2010 to 670 000 in 2013. We however still need to increase it to meet the White paper target.

To expand university education, the DHET has built two new universities, the Sol Plaatje University in

Kimberly and the University of Mpumalanga in Mbombela. We will also soon launch the SefakoMakgatho Health Sciences University where the Medunsa Campus of Limpopo University will be developed in a fully autonomous health services university. The development of the three universities is expected to contribute to the process of accelerating access to university education and producing high level skills for our country. A key strategy to support this expansion has been significant infrastructure investments amounting to R6.8 billion between 2007 and 2011, and a further commitment of R6 billion over the 2012 to 2014 Medium Term Expenditure Framework. The establishment of new infrastructure for Sol Plaatje University will require a further investment of approximately R5 billion over the next ten years. The establishment of the University of Mpumalanga will require a further investment of approximately R7 billion over the next ten years. SefakoMakgatho Health Sciences University requires a further investment of

R1.5 billion to grow from currently 4000 students to 7000 students in 2019.

The Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs), which are some of the main exhibitors in this Career Festival, are an integral part of the post-school system. SETAs have developed excellent projects aimed at addressing some of the key challenges faced by young people in accessing education and training opportunities. Working together with government, TVET colleges and private sector partners, SETAs continue to make a significant difference in the national and provincial economy by providing funding, career guidance, workplace-based training, apprenticeships, artisanship training learnerships, and other sector-focused interventions.

We have requested SETAs to open offices in townships and rural areas. They have heeded the call and to date we have 40 SETA offices in public TVET colleges. These offices are not only expected to assist students

with work placements, but are also intended to play a central role in advising the youth about career opportunities. The DHET remains committed to opening even more such offices in TVET colleges, reaching out to townships and villages, and ensuring that career development is emphasised in these communities that are still too often at the margins of our society.

To meet the needs of those who do not qualify or cannot find a place at TVET colleges or universities, the DHET intends establishing a new type of institution – community colleges. It is vital to our future. Community colleges will be built on the basis of the current adult learning centres which will be merged, strengthened and extended to include vocational and community-oriented programmes. We expect the community colleges to cater to one million students by 2030. The implication here is that all South Africans will be afforded an opportunity to acquire skills



irrespective of race, social status, previous educational attainment or gender.

Poverty and social inequities stem from the exclusion of the majority from education, training and the labour market. Higher employment and economic participation would help greatly in reducing poverty and income inequality, but we cannot achieve high employment if we do not address the skills challenges. As a result, government has invested heavily in the post-school sector. For instance the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) budget has increased substantially in an effort to keep pace with the increasing number of students in dire need of funding, almost tripling from R3.1 billion in 2009 to over R9 billion in 2014. I also need to stress that a large section of today's black middle class owes its success to NSFAS and its forerunner, the Tertiary Education Fund of South Africa (Tefsa).

In spite of this large increase in a short period of time, the financial demand in 2013 by eligible students led to a shortfall of R2.6 billion. This has led the Department to secure an additional R1 billion for NSFAS funding. This is still not enough, but as we all know there are many pressing demands on the fiscus and even something as important as financing tomorrow's skilled South Africans must compete for funds.

Very importantly, the private sector should play a central role in funding post-school education in this country. On the 8<sup>th</sup> of February this year, I presided over the official hand-over of contracts to matriculants who were awarded bursaries and learnership opportunities for the 2014 academic year by SAPREF oil refinery in Durban. SAPREF offered 70 learnership opportunities and 10 bursaries for university studies in engineering. This is an important contribution towards

improving the lives of the beneficiaries and of the communities from which they come. We need more initiatives of this nature from the private sector.

The private sector should also ensure that our students receive workplace learning experience. Government has already come to the party in this regard. Indeed, our Department's slogan is, "turning every workplace into a training space". On 28 November 2013, DHET and the Gauteng provincial government launched the Gauteng FET graduate placement programme. During the launch, it was announced that more than 2500 learners had been placed in the province's various governmental departments for workplace training. DHET officials are hard at work, engaging other provincial governments, including the one in this province, to draw lessons from the Gauteng student placement programme. And the response is positive. Free State and KwaZulu-Natal government have come

to the party! Disappointingly, few private companies are on board. The question is: how will the broader community of students find employment upon completion of their studies if they do not receive work experience?

**Now I want to speak to every learner sitting in front of me:**

I have spoken about opportunities that you can pursue in post school education and training. But you have to play your part... To succeed in life takes a lot of aspiration, responsibility and hard work. You have to aspire to reach the top rung in your life.

Take responsibility of your own life – and career choice.

Work hard at school and make use of numerous opportunities such as the mentioned DHET initiatives and the opportunities presented here at the exhibition to get as much information as possible to make informed decisions about your career. Don't let opportunities

like steam trains pass and you stay alone at the station. It's just empty tracks for the train of opportunity is gone. The more informed you are the better your ability is to make choices and decisions in life. Work hard to achieve your goals in life. Use this moment and time wisely to gain important information about available career opportunities. Choose a career to realise your potential and help our country become a force to be reckoned with.

The young people of this province must take advantage of the educational opportunities offered by the post school education and training sector. You must use the opportunities at institutions such as Sedibeng TVET college. In fact some of you have already completed your secondary schooling and if you want to study at a college or university next year, you need to *Apply Now!* Applications at some institutions have already closed. Therefore it is important to act now. Do not wait.

Take advantage of this Career Festival and other opportunities offered and reap the fruits offered. Valuable information is to be found at the exhibition stalls. This is an opportunity you must not miss.

As a country we have come a long way. I urge you, the youth of post-apartheid South Africa, to take advantage of opportunities magnanimously presented to you today. This Career Festival is an opportunity for you to interact directly with career guidance specialists, Universities, TVET Colleges, SETAs, Industry and all other stakeholders regarding your future career.

I would like to thank all those who have played a significant role in organising this festival. This includes members of my Department, the Gauteng Province, the Sedibeng Municipality and the Sedibeng TVET College where we are today. I would also like to thank the different exhibitors for agreeing to form part of this important initiative aimed at empowering our children.

To the youth gathered here today I say: Your future is in your hands.

At this time in our history, perhaps more so than ever before, young people must make the right decisions that will see them realise their potential and prosper.

Let the words of Nelson Mandela inspire us:

"Education is the great engine of personal development. It is through education that the daughter of a peasant can become a doctor, that the son of a mine worker can become the head of the mine; that a child of farm workers can become the president of a great nation. It is what we make out of what we have, not what we are given, that separates one person from another".

Thank you