



higher education
& training

Department:
Higher Education and Training
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Budget Speech, National Council of Provinces, 2015

Honourable Speaker

Cabinet Colleagues and Deputy Ministers

Deputy Minister of Higher Education and Training Honourable Mduzuzi Manana

Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Higher Education and Training

Honourable Members of Parliament

Director-General and Staff of the Department

Heads and Executives of all our Post-School Organisations and Institutions

My Wife, Phumelele

Honoured Guests

My Special Guests...

Ladies and Gentlemen, and Comrades

INTRODUCTION

The agenda for the transformation of our education system was shaped by decades of struggles, including the struggle of people's education for people's power. This agenda was translated into government policies by the ANC government as from 1994. On this 60th Anniversary of the Freedom Charter we can say that much has been done to open the doors of learning and culture. For example, black and women students are now in the majority in our universities, and the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) has supported more than 1.5 million poor students. Another important sign that we have been making progress is the decrease in dropout rates. In 2005, the first-year dropout rate was 25.1%, however, in 2012 it had dropped to 19.1%, a significant difference.

However, we still have a long way to go and transformation efforts must continue uncompromisingly.

Despite the significance of symbols such as names and statues, we must not conflate these with more fundamental matters of transformation. There remains an urgent need to radically change the demographics of our professoriate; transform the curriculum and research agendas; cultivate greater awareness of Africa; eliminate racism, sexism and all other forms of unjust discrimination; improve academic success rates; and expand student support. Some institutions have made substantial progress in transforming themselves, but others have lagged behind. Focused attention by all of us is required on this matter.

This year I will pay close attention to accelerated transformation in our universities, including setting concrete targets and transformation indicators. Later this year, I am convening the second higher education Summit as part of this focus. I am also resourcing the Transformation Oversight Committee to assist us in this regard.

Specific Interventions

The South African university system has a good academic reputation and according to a study by the Centre for Development and Enterprise, only 5% of graduates are unemployed.

This good academic reputation has attracted over 70 000 foreign students to come and study in our institutions. Most of these are from the South African Development Community (SADC) and other African countries.

The violence against foreign nationals has caused harm to our country. It is essential that foreign students and staff feel safe in our institutions. I have written to all Vice-Chancellors to ask them to be vigilant in this regard.

Strategic Disability Policy Framework

Disabled people have not been fairly treated in our country. In December 2014, I appointed a Ministerial Committee to develop a Strategic Disability Policy Framework that will strengthen the implementation and monitoring of disability policies across the PSET system.

Policy and Legislation

This financial year I will introduce the Higher Education Amendment Bill, 2015 to Parliament, as well as amendments to the Skills Development Act. These amendments also aim to strike an appropriate balance between institutional autonomy and public accountability of universities.

Over the past year, various draft policies and reports aimed at accelerating transformation have been published for public comment. These include the Social Inclusion Policy Framework, Recognition of Prior Learning policy, and the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Principles on Articulation.

National Plan for Post-School Education and Training

Based on its White Paper, the Department has started the process of developing a new National Plan for Post-School Education and Training, which will consolidate the Department's programmes into a single coordinated and integrated framework. This will guide the work of the Department over the next fifteen years to 2030. We intend finalising this by March 2017.

Budget

For the 2015 MTEF, the budget of the Department, excluding direct charges, projects increases over 3 years at an annual average rate of 5.9%, from R39 billion in 2014/15 to R46.3 billion in 2017/18. The amount of R41.8 billion for 2015/16 is an increase of R2.8 billion (or 7.3%) on the 2014/15 allocation, excluding direct charges.

Direct charges, which represent the skills levies for Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) and the National Skills Fund (NSF), are expected to increase at an annual average rate of 9.5% from R13.2 billion in 2014/15 to R17.4 billion in 2017/18. The total estimated direct charges for 2015/16 amount to R14.7 billion.

National Student Financial Aid Scheme

Since its inception as the Tertiary Education Fund of South Africa (TEFSA), NSFAS has awarded approximately R50 billion in loans and bursaries to about 1.5 million students.

For the 2015/16 financial year, the NSFAS budget from the Department comprises R4.094 billion for university study loans, R2.205 billion for TVET college bursaries, and R148.878 million for administration costs. This is supplemented by recovered funds and donor allocations, which further increases the total budget of NSFAS to R9.5 billion for the allocation of 205 000 university student loans and bursaries and 200 000 TVET college bursaries.

Province	TVET Allocation (R)	Percentage	University Allocation	Percentage
Easter Cape	238,021,445.00 (8)	10.8	732,254,327.00 (4)	14.58
Free State	132,840,404.00 (4)	6.03	257,985,549.00 (2)	5.12
Gauteng	488,706,655.00 (8)	22.17	1,687,470,039.00 (7)	33.52
KZN	380,825,134.00 (8)	17.28	1,027,981,664.00 (4)	20.42
Limpopo	294,618,662.00 (7)	13.37	521,945,637.00 (2)	10.37
Mpumalanga	135,106,153.00 (3)	6.13	3,500.000.00 (1)	0.07
Northern Cape	45,181,565.00 (2)	2.05	3,500,000.00 (1)	0.07
North-West	141,666,415.00 (3)	6.43	190,073,495.00 (1)	3.78
Western Cape	238,182,559.00 (6)	10.81	609,211,830.00 (4)	12.10
Total	2,204,000,003.00		5,033,922,561.00*	

* Includes Department of Higher Education and Training, National Skills Fund and NSFAS recoveries

Donor allocations include not only funds from the Department of Basic Education (Funza Lushaka), Department of Social Development, Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) and National Skills Fund (NSF), but also funding for bursaries from the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Governments. In 2014, the allocations received from these two provincial government departments assisted 1 286 students studying at 23 public higher education institutions.

NSFAS has implemented the new loans and bursaries management system, which became operational on 7 October 2013. The centralised, electronic application system is being phased in over a period of three academic years and commenced in 2014 with first-time NSFAS applicants registered at 6 universities and 5 TVET colleges applying directly to NSFAS. The following eleven institutions took part in the first pilot phase:

- Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University - Eastern Cape Province
- Durban University of Technology - KwaZulu-Natal Province

- University of Mpumalanga - Mpumalanga Province
- Sol Plaatje University - Northern Cape Province
- University of South Africa - Gauteng Province
- University of Venda - Limpopo Province
- Ekurhuleni East TVET College - Gauteng Province
- King Hintsa TVET College - Eastern Cape Province
- South Cape TVET College – Western Cape Province
- Umfolozi TVET College – KwaZulu-Natal Province
- Motheo TVET College – Free State Province

For the 2015/16 financial year, NSFAS will extend the pilot, increasing the percentage of NSFAS funded students from 15% to 30% for the 2016 academic year. The new loan and bursaries management system will be extended, and aims to address the challenges of the old system, which was found to be inadequate and outdated.

Sadly, we have found evidence of corruption in the application of NSFAS loans and bursaries within the system. A forensic investigation will be commencing shortly to determine the scope and depth of corrupt practices in the administration of NSFAS.

Increasing and Expanding Access to University Education

The university education system is expected to grow from a headcount enrolment of 983 698 students in 2013 to 1.1 million in 2019. We confidently expect to achieve the target of 1.6 million students by 2030 as per the National Development Plan and White Paper.

Based on the report on the review of university funding, I established a technical team to draft a revised funding framework. I have already accepted some of the recommendations including the implementation of a Historically Disadvantaged Institutions Development Grant of R2.050 billion over the next five-year period. This should enable these institutions to become financially stable and improve the quality of their governance, teaching, learning and research.

We are also investigating the cost drivers in higher education to better understand the reasons for fee increases.

New Universities

Over the past two years, the university system has expanded with the addition of three new universities, and now all our provinces have at least one university.

I am pleased to report that the development of both Sol Plaatje University (SPU) in Kimberly and the University of Mpumalanga (UMP) in Mbombela are progressing well. Both universities opened their doors to their second cohort of students earlier this year. The Department is supporting their development over the 2015 to 2017 MTEF period with earmarked funding of approximately R 4 billion for infrastructure and operations. The roll-out of new infrastructure at both universities is in full swing. Since beginning of 2015, four cranes tower over the City of Kimberley and similar construction activity is rolling out at Mbombela and Siyabuswa. 13 New multi-storey buildings are under construction to enable an enrolment of 1 160 students at UMP and 700 students at SPU in the 2016 academic year. This is the first phase of a 10 to 15 year construction programme which will support 7 500 students at SPU and 18 000 students at UMP (15 000 on the Main Campus and 3 000 on the Siyabuswa Campus).

The Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University (SMU), the third new university established since the dawn of our democracy, is located in Gauteng and opened with its first intake of just over 5 000 students in January 2015, when it incorporated the Medunsa Campus of the University of Limpopo (UL). It was officially launched by President Zuma on 14 April 2015. As a comprehensive health and allied sciences university, it is the first of its kind in South Africa and will offer a broad range of programmes from higher certificates to PhDs.

As part of the expansion of health sciences programmes, and particularly the need to ensure the production of doctors for all our provinces, a new School of Medicine, the ninth in the country, is being established within the Health Sciences Faculty of the University of Limpopo. The MBChB programme, which has now been accredited by the Health Professionals Council of South Africa and the Council on Higher Education, will have an initial enrolment of 50 students in 2016. This will increase to the eventual target of 250 by 2019. In 2019, the programme will generate full input and output subsidy, which will come into effect in 2021. The new School of Medicine will be located adjacent to the UL Edu-Park site in Polokwane.

Increasing Student Success by Improving the Quality of Teaching and Learning

One of the highest priorities in the post-school system, is improving the quality of teaching and learning. My Department is supporting universities through a number of programmes, including:

- The expansion of foundation provisioning programmes to assist under-prepared students;
- Teaching and learning development grants;
- Investing in university infrastructure with a large proportion of the funding going to historically disadvantaged institutions; and
- Disability and maintenance audits to improve accessibility for student and staff with disabilities.

Strengthen Universities' Capacity to Produce Quality Teachers

Last year, I committed to focus on developing educators at all levels. The number of new teacher graduates continues to grow with 16 496 new teachers graduating in 2013. By 2019, this figure will exceed 20 000, and the teacher supply-demand gap will largely be addressed. Increasingly over the next 5 years, our attention will be focussed on the quality of teacher graduates. We will work with the Provinces through the Provincial Teacher Education and Development Committees, to ensure better alignment between the production of teachers and provincial needs.

This year, my Department will implement a programme to strengthen universities' capacity to produce quality teachers for all education sub-sectors including: early childhood development; primary education; college education and training; and special needs education, ensuring sufficient quality teachers for institutions across the various provinces over time.

Academic Staffing

In partnership with all universities in the country, we are currently in the process of recruiting 125 new academics as part of the first phase of the *Staffing South Africa's Universities Framework (SSAUF)*, a comprehensive approach to building capacity and developing the future generation of academics and to increase the number of highly capable black and women academics at all levels.

Centre for African Language Teaching

With support from a number of partners, a Centre for African Languages Teaching has been established as part of the University of Mpumalanga's Siyabuswa campus. This centre will promote research into teaching African languages, particularly the dominant languages of Mpumalanga Province, IsiNdebele and SiSwati. The focus of the research will be on developing African languages as languages of teaching and learning, particularly in the foundation phase.

Adult Education and Training

9 Community Education and Training College Administrative Centres were established in all provinces on 1 April 2015 allowing for the merger of existing public adult learning centres into these Community Colleges. The Community Colleges are hosted by organisations that the Department has partnered with and located in various partner sites in:

- Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University in the Eastern Cape;
- Mangaung University Community Partnership Programme (MUCPP) in the Free State;
- Diepkloof Public Adult Learning Centre in Gauteng;
- Imbali precinct of Durban University of Technology (DUT) in KwaZulu-Natal;
- Pax College in Limpopo;
- Nkangala TVET College in Mpumalanga;
- Northern Cape TVET College in Upington;
- Mmakau Skills Centre in the North West; and
- Elgin Learning Foundation in Grabouw.

These colleges will be a new type of institution catering mainly for those who do not qualify for admission to Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges or universities. The Community Colleges will prepare students for the labour market or for self-employment as well as offering the National Senior Certificate for Adults (NASCA) and General Senior Certificates for Adults (GETCA), as well as the National Senior Certificate (NSC) to support candidates who were not successful in the NSC during their schooling. Negotiations with partners are continuing on the establishment of pilot Community Colleges in 2016, with the:

- University of Venda in Limpopo;
- Catholic Institute for Education for Skills Centres in the Free State and Gauteng;
- Orbit TVET College in North West; and
- Majuba TVET College in KwaZulu-Natal.

The Department is further revisiting recommendations from provinces on the establishment of pilot Community Colleges in Khayelitsha in the Western Cape and Kwaguqa in Mpumalanga. In addition, the identified administrative centres are also potential sites for the piloting of Community Colleges. Thereafter Community Colleges will progressively be rolled out in all provinces per municipal district.

Underpinning work on the establishment of Community Colleges is the development of appropriate legislation and policy for this sector. I have already approved the National Policy on Community Colleges and will be gazetting it shortly. This policy enables the Department to deal with the shifting of functions from provinces to the Department. Critical to the work in improving teaching and learning, is the Policy on Minimum Requirements for Programmes Leading to Qualifications for Educators and Lecturers in Adult and Community Education and Training. This is the first policy framework dealing specifically with qualifications for adult and community educators and lecturers.

Since 1994, adult education has been located at a directorate level in both national and provincial departments. Yet we estimate that in terms of the 2011 Census, there are 18 million South Africans who need adult education and training of one sort or the other. This is larger than our schooling, university and TVET college systems combined and I will therefore establish a branch on adult education and community college education and training within the Department.

Technical and Vocational Education and Training Colleges

TVET college enrolments have more than doubled over the past 5 years and will continue to increase, targeting 725 000 headcount enrolments this year, an increase of just over 39 000 on 2014. The pace of growth will now be reduced to focus on quality improvements, including: reviewing the policy for the National Certificate (Vocational) as well as the gradual transformation of the N-part-qualifications (N-

programmes to occupational qualifications); lecturer development, and improving student academic success; college improvement plans; and capacity building initiatives for student representative councils.

The focus on quality must extend to all aspects of a college. We will evaluate programme specific enrolments per province and in so doing start gradually working towards revising the existing Programme and Qualification Mix of colleges as part of a national planning process. This will be strongly aligned to the Strategic Integrated Projects programme of the Presidential Infrastructure Coordinating Committee this year.

We will be embarking on a process of identifying centres of specialisation per province, and build the capacity of selected TVET colleges to develop as centres of specialisation. This will be a gradual process, which will evolve over time. It is however important to note that we are starting the process of aligning TVET colleges to regional labour market demands.

We have piloted a number of dual system apprenticeship programmes in the West Coast and Port Elizabeth TVET colleges. In this year, we will start to pilot two of the newly developed Quality Council for Trades and Occupations occupational programmes in the plumbing and electrical qualifications at four TVET colleges, i.e. Eastcape Midlands, Port Elizabeth, Ekurhuleni West and Ekurhuleni East.

This academic year, for the first time, we introduced an elective subject in the National Certificate (Vocational) engineering programmes around renewable energy technology. Seven of our colleges have taken up this programme, and we are seeing particular interest in the Northern Cape and Eastern Cape, where a strong emphasis is being placed on renewable energy technology.

In the area of lecturer development, we have piloted and will now be implementing a web-based lecturer development programme, which will provide access to all lecturers nationally to receive curriculum updates and supplementary training in an accessible and cost effective manner.

TVET colleges in the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Western Cape have been approached to participate in the development of maritime skills linked to the

Operation Phakisa Oceans Economy, a presidentially led programme to revive and develop the opportunities from our oceans.

We have also embarked on an exchange programme where some TVET colleges have been nominated to partner with United Kingdom based Colleges to explore opportunities for management development and capacity building of the identified colleges.

The College Improvement Project run through JET Education Services has ended. We are pleased to say that there are no colleges currently under administration and we will be monitoring these colleges going forward.

Last year I committed to building new college campuses and establishing a foundation programme in Mathematics and Science. A comprehensive proposal on the foundation programme is now complete. Construction work at 3 of the 12 planned new TVET college campuses is underway, and later this year we will take delivery of the Thabazimbi campus. I also committed to the transfer of all TVET college and Adult Education staff into my department, and indeed this happened on 1 April 2015.

Honourable Members, let me digress for a moment and clarify the new nomenclature due to this function shift.

As from 1 April 2015, we have Department of Higher Education and Training Regional Offices and not Provincial Offices, so as not to confuse this with the functions of Provincial Education Departments' (PEDs) functions. This new landscape and our regional offices will facilitate more access for everyone in the country, and equity across provinces. I urge Honourable Members to encourage high-level individuals to be part of the governance and support functions, particularly the Councils of Community Colleges.

We recognise that despite the successful migration of staff and transfer of the TVET and Community Education and Training Centre (CETC) functions to the Department, there is still a risk of problems. To this effect, a Rapid Response Team has been established to deal with all queries and the post function shift clean-up exercise. Some of the mechanisms that the Department is using include establishing technical intervention task teams to effectively and speedily resolve specific issues, opening

various channels of communicating with our institutions and newly transferred personnel, and conducting road shows to the various institutions. The TVET sector is relatively stable and has well established systems to manage this transition.

We would like to thank the Provincial Education MECs and their Heads of Department for their cooperation, especially in this post function shift phase, by continuing to assist in dealing with blockages, providing us with accommodation for our regional offices and managing the adult education examinations.

We continue to make steady progress in catching up on the National Certificate Vocational certification backlog. 496 544 Certificates have been issued since 2012, with 103 195 certificates still being processed. The students affected by the problem do have statements of results, so that this does not hold them back from further study or employment as they could get a letter from the Department that confirms that they comply with the requirements for the certificate.

Institutionalising and piloting appropriate methods, systems and capacity for academic and exit support programmes in TVET colleges

3 TVET colleges in the Eastern Cape, Ingwe, Lovedale and King Hintsa jointly implemented a technology-based academic support programme for NC(V) Level 2 Mathematics and English Language using the Learnscape programme, a software-based programme that provides additional teaching of fundamental subjects.

The College of Cape Town, South Cape, Elangeni, Mnambithi and Mthashana TVET colleges opted for Remediation and Peer Tutoring. The aim was to train and provide Academic Support Assistants (ASAs) and Lecturer Assistants (LAs) from the ranks of high performing NC(V) Level 4 students at the college, who assist the lecturers during lessons with the implementation of the Academic Improvement Plan for specific subjects.

Elangeni TVET College developed assessment and monitoring materials for 20 subjects. 52 Lecturers have been trained on Remediation and study guides for Level 2 Mathematics and English were developed. Results have improved because of this intervention.

Mnambithi and Mthashana TVET colleges jointly offer remedial teaching services to students encountering learning difficulties in Mathematics, Mathematics Literacy and English through peer tutoring, and improved instructional design and delivery. NCV Level 2 students attended tutorial classes, while Durban University of Technology (DUT) tutors participated as Peer Tutors. Lecturers jointly developed peer-tutoring materials with DUT lecturers.

The West Coast and Taletso TVET colleges developed and implemented a work placement service model, which involved staff capacity building and placement of students in the workplace for work-based experience.

Orbit TVET College implemented a work readiness project, which provided students with access to software simulation that teaches students driving skills and enabled them to write a driver's licence test. The college also ran a job portal and implemented a Wellness Peer Mentoring Programme amongst other initiatives.

Higher Certificates offered in collaboration with TVET Colleges

The South African National Development Plan (NDP) states that by 2030, South Africans need to have access to education and training opportunities of the highest quality, relevant to our economic needs. The education and training system must play a greater role in building an inclusive society and providing equal opportunities for all South Africans to realise their full potential. South Africa requires an integrated and coordinated post-school education and training system, which provides a range of accessible education and training alternatives for young and older people across a wide range of post-school education and training institutions. There should be clear linkages between schools, Technical and Vocational Education and Training colleges, universities, other providers of education and training, and the world of work.

The development of Higher Certificates that can be offered through partnerships between TVET colleges and universities is welcomed. Such certificates provide opportunities for learners to gain access into TVET and university learning opportunities.

A number of South African universities, most notably in this process, the University of the Free State (UFS), Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) and

University of South Africa (UNISA) have heeded the call to develop and offer a range of Higher Certificates at NQF Level 5 in close cooperation with TVET colleges.

LINKING EDUCATION AND THE LABOUR MARKET

Sector Education and Training Authorities

When the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) were established, there was insufficient regulation and each SETA operated in isolation. Over the past 5 years, I have sought to improve this situation, but more is needed. I am now in the process of reviewing our skills development system following a study of reports and strategic policy documents as well as various departmental policies. I will shortly be publishing proposals on the new SETA landscape for consultation.

Last year I made a commitment that all TVET colleges would have SETA offices to facilitate the link between colleges and workplaces, and such offices have now been established.

I am of the view that the main focus of the SETAs must be training at the workplace, including facilitation of partnerships between educational institutions and employers. In order to do this, SETAs must become skills experts in their sectors and collect reliable data that contributes to national skills planning.

The alignment of education to the labour market remains essential to skills development. Work placement of learners in colleges has increased over the past few years. While this is not a compulsory part of the qualification, we believe it has a significant benefit for students and improves their chances of employment. Experience in other countries shows that it can also benefit employers.

The Department has developed an online registration system for students seeking Work Integrated Learning or work-based learning opportunities, and for employers who wish to provide training opportunities for students. This system will go live by 1 October 2015.

Skills Development Centres

The Department as part of expanding the provision of skills development across the country is exploring the concept of a Skills Development Centre model that is rooted in communities. This has seen the construction of some of these centres, which in most instances are linked with either a TVET college or university, which includes but not limited to:

- Vredendal - West Coast TVET College, all processes completed, contractor appointed and plans have been approved;
- Ingwavuma - Our Lady of Ingwavuma School, construction is completed, ready to be launched in September 2015;
- Bredasdorp - Boland TVET College, 80% construction completed;
- De Aar - Northern Cape Rural TVET College, further assessment of the current structure earmarked for refurbishment;
- Springbok, Namaqua District, the start date for the refurbishment will be finalized once the transfer of land has been concluded;
- Skills Centre at the University of Venda, building completed, ready to be launched in July 2015; and
- Bethal - Gert Sibande TVET College, land was identified by the SETA and the Municipality, projected start date is July 2015.

Various learning programmes, including but not limited to learnerships, skills programmes, apprenticeships are earmarked in these Skills Development Centres, depending on the needs of local communities, the main advantage of these Centres is that you can use limited space and still have a huge impact on the lives of young people and communities.

Strategic Integrated Projects

We have been centrally involved in skills development for and through the country's Strategic Integrated Projects. In my previous budget speech, I committed to publish and launch a *Skills for SIPs report*. During my Budget Vote speech in the National Assembly, I released a progress report on what has been undertaken thus far and what still needs to be done.

The Special Projects Unit, in the Department, has commenced a process of engaging with officials from the Offices of the Premiers in each province to trigger the establishment of a working partnership. This is to ensure that the skills needed by the Strategic Integrated Projects (SIPs), as well as other strategic or catalytic projects in the province, are identified and then developed and made available locally. A 21-step process has been developed to streamline this work, and toolkits have been developed to assist this process. Central to this process is the identification of Centres of Specialisation, either TVET colleges or universities that will focus on particular occupations in demand in the province, so that the resources available, including those from SETAs and the National Skills Fund, can be targeted for optimal impact.

We invite the Premiers to support this initiative and approve the partnership as proposed, so that together we can not only train young people and enhance their prospects of meaningful employment after training, but at the same time ensure that the skills needed to build and maintain the infrastructure that will underpin your provincial growth and development are available. A draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been prepared for consideration by the Directors-General in your offices, which we hope will help to structure our partnership going forward. We believe this is the beginning of great things to come.

Human Resource Development Council South Africa

31 March 2015 marked the end of the first 5 years since the implementation of the targets that were set in the Human Resource Development (HRD) Plan. Amongst the achievements made in the past financial year:

The Human Resource Development Council South Africa, led by the Deputy President and administered by our Department, launched a TVET college campaign known as Adopt-a-TVET College to promote cooperation and partnerships between industry and TVET colleges, to collaborate on projects that will enhance the quality of education and training, while improving skills that are critical to success in the workplace. This will strengthen access to, and the quality of, education in TVET colleges especially in the rural areas.

The HRD Council is working with provinces through 6 Provincial HRD Councils established to date, to ensure that the work of the Council is advocated nationwide. The provinces of KwaZulu-Natal, Western Cape, Eastern Cape, Free State, Limpopo and the Northern Cape have established Councils. It is expected that the other 3 Provincial Councils will be established within the current financial year.

For the next 5 years, the Council will focus on scarce and critical skills and mid-level occupations; Mathematics and Science; Provision of Quality Education and Training using Information Communication Technology as tools; TVET College access; and Early Childhood Development provision.

Conclusion

I would like to conclude by thanking all the staff of our institutions for their efforts. I would also like to thank employers that are opening up their workplaces for training. I am grateful to the Deputy Minister, Mr Mduduzi Manana, the staff of the Department of Higher Education and Training led by the Director-General, Mr Gwebs Qonde, my personal staff in the Ministry and our public entities. Finally, my sincere gratitude also goes to the President and my Cabinet colleagues for their support. I would also like to thank my wife and my family for the continuous support they give me. Together we will move South Africa forward, through the provision of quality and affordable post-school education and training.