

**ADDRESS BY THE MEC FOR SOCIAL  
DEVELOPMENT, MRS. HAPPY JOYCE MASHAMBA,  
AT THE EVENT OF THE LIMPOPO YOUTH  
DEVELOPMENT AGENCY OFFICIAL LAUNCH,  
XINGWEDZI COLLEGE HALL, MALAMULELE.**

**28<sup>th</sup> June 2014**

**Programme Director;**

**MEC's present here;**

**Members of the Provincial Legislature;**

**The Executive Mayor of Vhembe District  
Municipality;**

**The Mayor of Thulamela Municipality;**

**The leaders of the various youth structures  
gathered here today;**

**Comrades and friends;**

**Ladies and gentlemen;**

## **All protocol observed.**

Today's ground breaking event reminds us of the tenacity and the courage of the youth of the Soweto uprising of 16<sup>th</sup> June 1976. We are in the midst of the month of youth celebrations when we place a lot of emphasis on this historic event, which helped shape the history of this country. We must never forget or downplay the huge contribution and ultimate sacrifice of those young people, who paid for their lives because of their beliefs and against an unjust education system.

Today, 38 years later and 20 years into our democratic dispensation, our youth still displays that brave spirit and willingness to take on the world. That is evident from the way they are still organizing themselves into formations that hones their young and enthusiastic spirits.

However, the enemies of the youth have now taken on a new form: unemployment; substance abuse; teenage pregnancy; HIV/AIDS. These are all the new scourges that have to be dealt with harshly, if our tenacious youth want to become the responsible and successful citizens of tomorrow.

Programme Director

The President of the Republic of South Africa, Jacob Zuma, in his State of the Nation Address announced a targeted growth in the economy of 5% in the next five years. He further said that to jump start the economy and fight unemployment and poverty, the country needs the participation of as many people as possible. It is therefore encouraging to note the willingness to get involved in this growth and development, by the Limpopo Youth Development Agency.

We are encouraged by their willingness to participate in this combined effort by government and civil society, to take responsibility for their own communities. This is exactly the kind of positive focus on continuous development amongst the youth, that will bear the fruits of this five year plan alluded to.

Programme Director

Because the Limpopo Provincial Government believes that, "Development is about people", the Department of Social Development recently rolled out the Mega Projects Initiative. The main aim is to encourage rural communities and previously disadvantaged individuals such as women; people living with disabilities and the youth, to organize themselves into a form of income-generating projects.

The Department then supports them with funding, training and by linking them with various role-players for technical support, mentoring and incubation.

This project also targets those who are prepared to create jobs for themselves and for others in their community. It is based on the principle of “teach a man how to fish” as opposed to “give a man a fish”. This relates well to the ruling party’s manifesto dictates of prioritizing job creation in the next five years – with the focus on sustainability.

However, the Department also has vocational training for the youth where young people learn the skills of welding, carpentry, hospitality and many more. These life skills will go a long way in ensuring they are ready to enter the job market but will also enable them to start their own small businesses.

This is where our various Youth Service structures play their invaluable roles - by assisting government to reach and mobilise the youth in communities and direct them on their paths to sustainable livelihoods. The Limpopo Youth Development Agency seems to be equal to the task of assisting our grade 12 learners in their career choices. We also applaud their vision of encouraging the establishment of more institutions of higher learning on the periphery of the Province. We hope that the relevant stakeholders in attendance today take note and we thank those institutions who have already pledged their support to this initiative.

However, young people, it is imperative that you also realise that youth development is not only about acquiring skills and employment. It is also about taking charge of the community and the environment in which you live.

We therefore encourage volunteerism and participation in structures such as Youth Against Crime; Cleaning Campaigns and Sport Against Teenage Pregnancy, to name but a few. First take charge of your communities and rid your immediate surroundings of the scourges of substance abuse; pollution; crime; violence against women and children; teenage pregnancies. Only when you live in a happy, healthy and progressive society, can you become successful in your respective vocations.

This brings me back to the new enemies of the youth, which I alluded to earlier. Young people gathered here today, we wish to address you in the strongest possible terms. We wish to warn you that abusing alcohol and drugs and engaging in promiscuous and unprotected sexual activities, will ruin your dreams for a prosperous future. HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections are a reality.

Abstain and say no to alcohol and drugs. We acknowledge that we live in a day and age where all these dangers lurk around every corner and tend to entice the youth in various ways. These dangers are disguised in social, printed and electronic media as something popular and something to be associated with. We implore you to rather practice good moral values and live a healthy lifestyle. Look after yourselves physically and mentally, before you can take on the world.

Programme Director

In closure let me make an observation that currently, we have so many youth development organisations and it appears that there is no synergy between the various structures at Provincial and Municipal level.

It is never a good practice to operate in silo's, when we can do so much more when we join hands and combine efforts. We therefore call on these youth service structures to facilitate a session in which all stakeholders are called together to discuss a way forward for coordination of these structures as well as best practices with regards to contributions and funding. It will be a good exercise for the youth themselves, to learn how to work together as a team to achieve their common goals.

All that is left of me is to wish the Limpopo Youth Development Agency well in all your activities. May you grow from strength to strength! You are the leaders of tomorrow. You are the future responsible adults that, together, will take South Africa forward. Be the change agents for the positive change you want to see in your communities!

I thank you!

Khanimambo!

Ndolivhuwa!

Ndzi Khensile!

Ke a leboga!