

SPEAKER NOTES FOR THE HONOURABLE MXOLISA SOKATSHA ON THE OCCASION OF THE PHAKAMILE MABIJA GRADUATION AND LONG SERVICE AWARD

10 November 2016

Programme Director

Honourable MEC's present

Honourable Executive Mayor Buyiswa Ximba

Executive and Senior Management

Recipients of our Long Service Awards and Graduates

Mabija Family

Good evening, Goeie naand

INTRODUCTION

Finding work, earning money and becoming independent, is a big challenge for many young people in South Africa, and a greater challenge in the rural Northern Cape Province. The Phakamile Mabija Artisan Programme, named in honour of the late Phakamile Mabija is a National Youth Service (NYS) Programme which is a structured skills development programme aimed at capacitating youth. NYS one of the pillars of Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP). This national project is aimed at engaging young people in a disciplined process of economic and personal development. At present, the National Youth Service is implemented as a government voluntary programme.

The implementation of the programme is structured as follows:

- Category 1 - structured National Youth Service that comprises of accredited learning and skills development, community development, and exit opportunities. The Phakamile Mabija Artisan Programme falls into this category.
- Category 2 - voluntary service by professionals in support of young people; and
- Category 3 - ad-hoc volunteering by youth who offer their talent and time in response to the needs of their communities.

Government's quest of youth development (at the back drop of the high youth unemployment rate) continues with all vigor. Today's graduation ceremony is proof of government's commitment and believe to create a better future for the youth of the Northern Cape Province.

Historic Overview

The Artisan Programme was named after the late Phakamile Mabija who was an African anti-Apartheid activist. He was detained by the South African Police on 27 June 1977 for alleged involvement in an incident when black commuters stoned public transport during a bus boycott in Galeshewe, Kimberley, South Africa. Mabija was due to appear in court on 8 July 1977 under charges under the Riotous Assemblies Act. Mabija died in detention on 7 July 1977 - the day before his scheduled court hearing. Real cause of his death is unknown although the Police of the Apartheid years reported that he plunged from the 6th floor of Transvaal Road police station in Kimberley.

Honourable MEC Molusi the former MEC of the Department of Transport, Roads and Public Works, announced in his Budget Speech of 2008 the commencement of the Artisan Programme in honour of the late Phakamile Mabija. The department has since then prioritised Youth Development. Youth development should be viewed as an integral part of addressing the challenges of the province and South Africa's development at large. It should also be seen as a central process of building a non-sexist, non-racist, democratic society. Disadvantaged youth must be empowered to overcome conditions which disadvantage them.

As government we need to give special attention and prioritise the following categories of youth:

- Young women
- Youth with disabilities (I do understand that an agreement was also formed with De Beers Technical Training Campus to fund and accommodate 5 youth who are differently abled within the programme and the De Beers Technical Training Campus will fund all the costs.)
- Unemployed youth
- Youth in rural areas
- Youth at risk

Furthermore, Dr Blade Nzimande, Minister of Higher Education, declared 2014 to 2024, the 'Decade of the Artisan'. For the next 10 years, government, private sector, organisations and individuals will be focusing on skills and training in the Artisan sector to address the critical shortage of Artisans. Similarly it is a challenge in the Northern Cape Province which has a huge mining industry. The demand of skilled and qualified artisans exceeds the supply. Through this programme, the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) aimed to churn out 30 000 artisans a year as prescribed by the National Development Plan (NDP). Qualified artisans such as these youth who are graduating tonight will assist us to successfully implement the country's Strategic Infrastructure Projects (SIP's), which included the building of roads, schools, universities, harbours, power stations and other social and economic infrastructure; thus taking us to a higher economic trajectory.

The strong collaboration between government and the private sector, is crucial to ensure that we create more sustainable opportunities for youth development. These opportunities allow young people to overcome the challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality. Through the Phakamile Mabija Artisan Programme partnerships were formed with 4 mining sectors namely: Sishen Mine, Kimberley Mine, Afrisam and Blackrock Mine. Blackrock Mine came on board with the 3rd Intake of the Artisan Programme that started in 2015. We call upon more stakeholders to come on board.

Youth should be active contributors to the countries growth and development. Young people should be considered as beneficiaries and as agents of change and not as passive recipients of government services. To all graduates congratulations and may you as empowered young people realise your full potential and understand your roles and responsibilities in making meaningful contribution to the development of a non-racial prosperous South Africa. Graduates, do not to allow your qualifications to go to waste, but think big, become entrepreneurs and create more job opportunities. You have obtained a national and international accredited Red Seal certificate issued in accordance with the standards recognized by the National Skills Authority, issued under Section 26 (D)(4) of the Skills Development Act of 1998. Do not let it end here today, reach for the stars, and strive to be the best that you can be! This is but just the start the sky is the limit!

Ladies and gentleman tonight we are also honouring, Long Service recipients and retirees. It is about the loyalty, commitment and pride that you have demonstrated in your service to the public and client departments. We have come here to acknowledge you and applaud you. We are proud of you and deeply appreciative of the service that you have rendered to this government in the years you have been with us.

As the leadership of this province we acknowledge you and express our thanks and appreciation for your contribution over the years in ensuring that the administration moves forward, services are rendered to the poor and marginalized, and more importantly for sharing your knowledge and skills with those public servants who remain behind.

I wish you all the best with your future endeavors and a happy retirement with your family especially your grand-children!

I thank you!

