

Address by the Premier of the Northern Cape, Ms Sylvia Lucas on the occasion of the Graduation Ceremony of the Phakamile Mabija Artisanship Programme, 13 September 2013, Mittah Seperepere Convention Centre at 18h00

Programme Director

Members of the Northern Cape Executive Council

Government Officials

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

And most importantly, all the Learners who have assembled here

It gives us great joy to celebrate with you yet another important provincial milestone, the Phakamile Mabija Learnership Programme.

It is in gatherings like these that we continue to draw strength from each other, encouraging one another to do more, going the extra mile to improve skills levels so that more South Africans become active participants in the economic growth of our country.

I am passionate about skills development and training and even more so considering all the good the learners will offer to the various communities in our home province, the Northern Cape.

I also come here today with the thought that indeed we can redefine the living notion of Ubuntu by proactively adopting a culture of genuine caring, sheer hard work, integrity and diligence.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure to witness these outstanding achievers as it marks the culmination of many months of hard work and determination.

I am certain that each and every one of you will be proud of the certificate you are about to receive: a reward for your effort that you will surely cherish and treasure for the rest of your life.

Honourable Learners, always remember that a journey of a thousand miles starts with the first step.

When you decided to participate in this learnership course you were determined to achieve excellent results.

Excellent results that are not only reflected on paper, but results that are worthy of improving the general wellbeing of our Province, and indeed our great country!

The Phakamile Mabija Artisanship Learnership Programme is named after a young anti-apartheid activist and Member of the Anglican Nomads Educational Group, who was detained by the South African Police on 27 June 1977 for alleged involvement in an incident when African and so called Coloured Commuters stoned public transport during a bus boycott in Galeshewe.

Phakamile Mabija, was arrested by the police at two o'clock in the morning, after searching the house, and detained for thirteen days.

He died at the age of 27 at the hands of policemen who had brutally beaten, threatened and intimidated him and later staging his death to look like a suicidal incident. People were misled to believe that he committed suicide by jumping from the seventh floor window of Kimberley Police station where he was detained. The former Transvaal Road was later renamed to honour his legacy.

Youngsters today take cognizance of these fallen heroes, who fought for our freedom, and paved the way to quality education. These young and energetic fallen heroes believed: Education will free us from the bondages of apartheid and will enable the oppressed (Blacks, Indians and so called Coloureds) to strive for economic freedom.

The National Youth Service Programme (NYS) under the umbrella of the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) has been in existence since its launch in 2007, mandated to

provide skills development to the unskilled and unemployed youth of South Africa. Amongst others, the NYS is aimed at:

Creating work and training opportunities for the unemployed youth while addressing the shortage of artisan skills within built environment. Ensuring that youth develop skills, understanding and aspirations for working within the built environment.

In 2008, the Presidency actively encouraged government departments to identify how certain areas of their core service delivery could be implemented through the National Youth Service (NYS).

Programme Director, I would like to challenge those who think EPWP is just about grass cutting and menial work. Today is a true reflection that the EPWP National Youth Service train youngsters in order to elevate their role and contribution to the building of our new society. This is about providing scarce skills that is in demand in the current economy, in public services, private sector, particularly in the mining and manufacturing sectors.

Today, Honourable Participants, as caring women and men of integrity; always tangibly grasping the opportunity to help our province and country to redefine and solve the many challenges we encounter.

I am strongly convinced that you will live up to the challenge to the very best of your abilities, and I once again congratulate you on your newly acquired success.

Honourable Graduands, when you join like minded South Africans in building our nation, I urge you to demonstrate your newly acquired competencies by giving off the best in terms of the qualifications you have attained.

In conclusion, Ladies and Gentlemen, I wish to congratulate and extend my best wishes to all successful achievers today. Your determination in completing this programme shows learner commitment to the cause of the skills revolution. Every one of you has the potential to achieve anything you want in life.

You must always remember that the seed of good education needs to be planted in the soil of a prepared life. You will reap a rich harvest if you continue to cultivate your dreams and aspirations with good choices and keep yourself motivated by personal definition of success.

You must always remember that the seed of good education needs to be planted in the soil of a prepared life. You will reap a rich harvest if you continue to cultivate your dreams and aspirations with good choices and keep yourself motivated by personal definition of success I am certain that you will go out there and serve our communities with dignity, respect and the highest level of professionalism.

Our communities definitely need your service.

Your commitment to improve the well-being of our province is sincerely appreciated.

I also take this opportunity to thank all the role-players for the excellent work, both academic and logistical, in making this event a resounding success.

I Thank You