

# **REPORT ON YOUTH PARLIAMENT**

**2020**

**HELD AT PARLIAMENT OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**ON A HYBRID VIRTUAL PLATFORM**

**DATE: 26 JUNE 2020**

**THEME: Youth Power-Growing South Africa together in a time of  
Covid-19**

## INDEX

### Contents

<b>INDEX.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>1. INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>5</b>
SESSION ONE.....	5
<b>2. OPENING REMARKS .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>3. THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENTARIANS IN ADVANCING THE YOUTH EMPOWERMENT AGENDA ACROSS THE THREE SPHERES: .....</b>	<b>7</b>
THE NEED FOR INSTITUTIONALISING ORGANISED STRUCTURES FOR YOUTH EMPOWERMENT .....	7
<b>4. THE ROLE OF THE NCOP IN ADVANCING YOUTH ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT THROUGH OUTCOMES-BASED OVERSIGHT .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>5. YOUTH EMPOWERMENT AT LOCAL GOVERNMENT: .....</b>	<b>10</b>
INTEGRATED PLANNING PERSPECTIVES TO ADVANCE YOUTH EMPOWERMENT AT LOCAL GOVERNMENT .....	10
SESSION TWO .....	11
<b>6. STATEMENTS: PROVINCES AND PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURES .....</b>	<b>11</b>
6.1 EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE .....	11
6.2 FREE STATE PROVINCE .....	12
6.3 KWA-ZULU NATAL PROVINCE .....	13
6.4 LIMPOPO PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE .....	13
6.5 NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE .....	13
7.6 NORTH-WEST PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE.....	14
7.7 WESTERN CAPE PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE .....	14
SESSION 3 .....	15
<b>8. YOUTH FORMATIONS.....</b>	<b>15</b>
8.1 SA YOUTH COUNCIL.....	15
8.2 YOUTH IN BUSINESS SOUTH AFRICA.....	15
8.3 SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL WOMEN'S FORUM .....	16
8.4 FINANCIAL SECTOR COALITION .....	16
8.5 BMF YOUNG PROFESSIONALS .....	17
8.6 SOUTH AFRICAN YOUTH MOVEMENT TERTIARY COOPERATIVE .....	17
8.7 NUM YOUTH .....	17

8.8	EMBRACE DIVERSITY MOVEMENT .....	18
8.9	FREE STATE RAINBOW SEEDS QUEER CHANGE MAKERS MOVEMENT .....	18
8.10	TRAXTION SHELTA.....	19
8.11	CULTURAL AND CREATIVE INDUSTRIES FEDERATION OF SOUTH AFRICA.	19
	SESSION 4 .....	20
<b>9.</b>	<b>STATEMENTS BY POLITICAL PARTIES.....</b>	<b>20</b>
9.1	DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE .....	20
9.2	ECONOMIC FREEDOM FIGHTERS .....	21
9.3	FREEDOM FRONT + .....	22
9.3	<b>ACDP</b> .....	22
9.4	UDM.....	23
9.5	GOOD .....	23
9.6	NFP.....	24
9.7	AIC .....	24
9.8	PAC.....	25
9.9	ATM.....	25
9.9	AL 'JAMA-AH .....	25
9.10	COPE .....	25
9.11	IFP.....	26
9.13	ANC.....	26
	SESSION 5 .....	27
<b>10.</b>	<b>INTERACTIVE SESSION .....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>11.</b>	<b>CLOSING.....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>12.</b>	<b>SUMMARY OF KEY CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....</b>	<b>33</b>
12.1	CHALLENGES .....	33
12.2	RECOMMENDATIONS .....	33
12.2.1	YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT.....	33
12.2.2	YOUTH ACCESS TO EDUCATION .....	34
12.2.3	YOUTH AND GENDER BASED VIOLENCE .....	34
12.2.4	LGBTQI+.....	34
12.2.5.	YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES .....	34
12.2.6	YOUTH AND SOCIETY .....	35
12.2.7.	YOUTH, PARLIAMENT AND THE EXECUTIVE .....	35

<b>13. RESOLUTIONS PER PORTFOLIO AND FOCUS AREAS .....</b>	<b>35</b>
13.1    Youth, Covid-19 and the Economy .....	35
13.2    Youth and Unemployment .....	36
13.3    Youth and the Economy .....	37
13.4    Youth and Local Public Procurement.....	38
13.5    Youth and access to finance and credit .....	40
13.3    Youth, Education and skills development.....	41
13.4    Youth and Government.....	42
13.5    Youth and Gender based violence.....	43
13.6    Youth and Parliament .....	44

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

On 26 June 2020, the Parliament of the Republic of South Africa hosted a hybrid Youth Parliament that was attended by various youth formations, representatives from legislatures, provincial and local government and members of the national, provincial and local executive. Some of the delegates were physically present in Parliament's National Assembly while others were on the Zoom virtual platform.

The Deputy Chairperson of the NCOP, Ms Sylvia Lucas, opened the session by commemorating the 1976 youth activists as well as the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Freedom Charter. She indicated that the deliberations of the sessions should result in realistically and practically implementable initiatives.

The young members of Parliament opened the session outlining challenges faced by the youth with regards to unemployment, poverty and inequality, especially during the state of COVID-19. The Youth Parliament noted that Covid-19 has amplified the challenges facing the youth, particularly in relation to increased unemployment. Statistics reveal that the groups most affected by unemployment include Africans, females and youth in rural areas. Gender based violence and femicide is a youth challenge and this too has increased during the Covid-19 period.

At the meeting young people raised a number of issues pertaining to the development of small, micro and medium enterprises (SMMEs) and cooperatives. The youth highlighted several issues that affect young people in business including concerns about the effects of the COVID 19 on youth owned enterprises. They believe however, that youth entrepreneurship is the solution to the country's socio- economic challenges of unemployment, economic transformation and creation of opportunities needed to end poverty.

The participants highlighted several challenges but also proposed solutions that government should act on and that Parliament must oversee.

## **SESSION ONE**

## **2. OPENING REMARKS**

The Deputy Chairperson to the National Council of Provinces (NCOP), Ms Sylvia Lucas, welcomed all delegates to the first hybrid Youth Parliament scheduled on a quasi-virtual platform due to the Covid 19 lockdown Regulations. Ms Lucas reflected on the symbolism and significance of the day set aside for hosting the 2020 Youth Parliament.

Firstly, the day is about remembering a very important action by the heroic youth of 1976 who revolted against an educational system that was not responsive to their needs and realities and ensured that their rights to education in their mother tongue is respected.

Secondly, it is about acknowledging the critical role played by youth leading to the adoption of the Freedom Charter, which is now a blueprint of a desired South Africa. 26 June 2020 is also the 65<sup>th</sup> year since the adoption of the Freedom Charter in Kliptown. Lastly it is about recognising that each generation has always faced a set of challenges, and that youth have always been active in addressing these challenges and negative narratives undermining youth development.

Ms Lucas advised that the journey travelled by the youth of 1976 should encourage the youth of today, to take stock by reflecting on progress achieved, as well as identifying current struggles that need further youth activism. The youth of today have far better opportunities than the 1976 youth, and as such should utilise available mechanisms to accelerate youth empowerment.

The challenges facing youth today include youth unemployment, poverty, inequality, and gender-based violence, and these have now been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic. These challenges may hinder the advancement of youth, but at the same time provides a platform and an opportunity for youth to find creative ways of addressing current challenges.

The continued high rate of youth unemployment in South Africa presents a serious risk to the promotion of an inclusive economy and society. The nature of youth unemployment is such that it continues to affect African and female youth most and it is highest for those in rural areas or urban townships and informal settlements.

Ms Lucas stressed the need to make sure that we continue to address these challenges so that we do not reinforce and worsen the racial, income, spatial and gender inequality as this will continue the intergenerational transmission of poverty.

What must be done to improve the material conditions of our youth, particularly post Covid 19? We must pay particular attention to the businesses of young people and small business where young people are employed and ensure that they are supported to continue doing so.

The current Youth Parliament is taking place under circumstances of the severe strain of Covid 19. Despite these uncertain times, it is also exciting times as it presents an opportunity to change our trajectory of how we are doing things.

She stressed that the deliberations during the Youth Parliament should be focussed on identification and adoption of strategies towards accelerated youth development and elimination of intergenerational challenges like poverty. Youth should actively participate and lead in all youth related programs and radically transform and tackle any system not responsive to the needs and aspirations of youth.

Hon Lucas prompted the participants on a quote of Thomas Sankara that reminds us that:

*"You cannot carry out fundamental change without a certain amount of madness.  
In this case, it comes from nonconformity, the courage to turn your back on the old formulas, the courage to invent the future.*

---

*It took the madmen of yesterday for us to be able to act with extreme clarity today.  
I want to be one of those madmen.  
We must dare to invent the future.*

Ms Lucas challenged the representatives to be one of those “mad (wo)men” and to give us a way forward and dare to invent a new future for South Africa.

### 3. THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENTARIANS IN ADVANCING THE YOUTH EMPOWERMENT AGENDA ACROSS THE THREE SPHERES:

#### THE NEED FOR INSTITUTIONALISING ORGANISED STRUCTURES FOR YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

Hon K D Mahlatsi, a Member of the Portfolio Committee on Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development addressed the delegation on the role of parliamentarians in advancing the youth empowerment agenda across the three spheres of government.

Hon Mahlatsi reflected on the 1976 generation and their struggle for freedom juxtaposed to the pandemic that humanity globally is facing today, a health emergency that we all never anticipated or planned for.

Apartheid and colonialism created a system whereby the African youth were systematically denied of opportunities based on race. Hon Mahlatsi emphasized that those who were killed in 1976 and the names of those who have lost their lives in the student uprising, must be remembered as a blueprint of our rich history against the apartheid regime. These young people put their lives on the line to shape the landscape of politics of country.

It is important to remember the adoption of the Freedom Charter on this day, 65 years ago. Linking the Freedom Charter with the struggle of young people is important. The South African youth have a history of being locomotives for change. The involvement of young people in politics, then in 1976 and now, can play a vital turning point in our society and bring about change in political dynamics, due to fresh, new, creative, and innovative perspectives. She implored the youth of today to grapple with what we have done to contribute to the reduction of unemployment in our country, what we have done to address poverty and inequality and what policies have been advocated for to deal with the challenges of our time. She emphasized that we need to reconcile facts with the truth and truth with the facts.

Poverty and unemployment knows no colour but monopoly capital has. The remnants of apartheid have left South Africa divided, left us poor and continue to inflict poverty and drown us as an unequal society. South Africa remains a colonization of a special type with the majority enjoying their independence but continue to suffer due to poverty and the minority continue to enjoy the fruits of democracy through monopoly capital.

She highlighted that the presence of young people in legislatures and municipal councils comes with great expectations from youth constituencies and the public at large. The young parliamentarians and councillors are expected to be champions of youth empowerment both inside and outside of

legislatures and municipal councils. The differing political views and ideologies often compromise collective efforts by young parliamentarians and councillors to have a common voice in relation to the advancement of youth.

The innovative and creative nature of youth can be exploited by those in legislatures and municipal councils to reshape these institutions to be responsive to the needs of youth. It is important for each generation to be proponents of progressive change, and to pave way for future generation.

Hon Mahlatsi emphasized that there should be mechanisms in place to strengthen and unite young people across party political lines, around a common goal of youth advancement and empowerment. A realisation by all young parliamentarians and councillors that social and economic ills transcend across racial and party-political lines should encourage unity.

The establishment of social activism-based structures within legislatures and municipal councils, can strengthen the ability to collaborate across party political tensions towards youth advancement. These structures can serve as a:

- platform for young parliamentarians and councillors to champion for youth empowerment, and
- support structure for all young parliamentarians and councillors.

The youth have always been proponents of progressive change, and each generation must create its own agenda and mission. The unity of current youth in legislatures and municipal councils, as well as building partnerships and alliances can intensify efforts to advance youth empowerment.

Collective lobbying and advocacy efforts by youth in legislatures and municipal councils would lead to:

- Effective oversight over implementation of programs aimed at youth empowerment, including preferential procurement for youth owned businesses;
- Reprioritisation of youth for land redistribution;
- Intensified efforts in implementation of programmes aimed at eradication of gender-based violence and femicide; and
- Increase in involvement in grassroots youth-based activism and in number of youths interested and participating in politics.

Unlike the youth of 1976, the youth of 2020 have better opportunities to access education and receive social support. Parliament too, is an instrument that the youth of 1976 never had. Youth should use this tool to address key issues impacting them.

Youth unemployment is very high and the economy of the country excludes the youth despite some being graduates. COVID-19 has increased unemployment, particularly amongst youth. Youth should be involved in economic decisions on forging a way forward for South Africa and the participation of youth in business should be promoted.

Hon Mahlati highlighted the triple oppression faced by women in terms of race, class and gender and how this oppression plays out with the scourge of gender based violence. This cannot continue – young men and women must ensure that we confront the scourge of gender based violence.

The youth of today must continue to galvanize young people to be proponents of change.

#### 4. THE ROLE OF THE NCOP IN ADVANCING YOUTH ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT THROUGH OUTCOMES-BASED OVERSIGHT

Hon I Ntsube, one of the youngest Members of the sixth Parliament serves on the Social Services Select Committee, reflected on the role of the NCOP in advancing youth economic empowerment through outcomes-based oversight.

Hon Ntsube reflected on the role of youth in 1976 and observed that they were more united as they shared a common vision and value. South Africa is faced with an unprecedented number of gender based violence cases and it is important for men to re-educate the boy child on how to treat women.

The high rate of unemployment has further been exacerbated by Covid-19 and whilst the executive has acted to minimise job losses, the gap between the poor and rich are widening. There is a need for both government and the private sector to ensure that job losses are minimised.

The NCOP as a parliamentary house concerned with the interests of provinces, should be abreast of all obstacles and barriers hindering adequate participation of youth in the economy. The varied and distinct provincial obstacles that contribute to the high rate of youth unemployment should always be on the agenda of the NCOP, as these obstacles often contribute to many other social ills facing youth, including gender-based violence.

The NCOP also needs to be at the fore in transformation by reviewing all programs deemed unresponsive to current challenges facing the youth. The NCOP should keep up with ever changing challenges facing youth in various provinces and lead in addressing those challenges.

The Covid-19 pandemic is an invisible challenge facing youth in the country, as it has brought to the fore and strengthened existing inequalities and other difficulties that undermine efforts in advancing youth economic empowerment.

The NCOP is ideally positioned to play a critical role in advancing youth economic empowerment by ensuring the:

- Effective participation of youth in the law-making process towards adoption of youth responsive laws;
- Regular conduct impact assessment of laws and programs on youth;
- Effective oversight over implementation of youth laws, policies and programmes aimed at eliminating youth unemployment, as well as implementation of 40% youth preferential procurement;
- Review of current basic education curricula, towards an inclusive and responsive education system aimed at producing entrepreneurs i.e. job creators and not job seekers; and
- Passing of laws mandating an increase in number of youth represented in Parliament.

## 5. YOUTH EMPOWERMENT AT LOCAL GOVERNMENT:

### INTEGRATED PLANNING PERSPECTIVES TO ADVANCE YOUTH EMPOWERMENT AT LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Councillor MP Hlungwane represented the South African Local Government Association (SALGA). Councillor Hlungwane reiterated the fact that local government as a sphere of government closest to communities has a critical role to play to advance youth empowerment through the implementation of the National Youth Policy. SALGA is strategically positioned to support municipalities to mainstream these youth policies and plans.

A very powerful mechanism at the disposal of local government is the use of the integrated developmental planning (IDP) system. The effective and credible use of the IDP system with active participation of youth is a key towards planning, budgeting, and implementation of youth responsive programs.

Partnerships and building relations with other spheres of government as provided for in the Constitution and other intergovernmental relations framework, is another tool made available to local government. In addition, the Constitution also mandates the local government to execute certain functions towards being a developmental state able to adequately meet the needs of communities. Local government can increase its responsiveness to youth and advance youth empowerment by undertaking the following activities:

- Provision of youth responsive basic services;
- Ensure adequate participation of youth in local economic development initiatives and empowerment programmes, such as, extended public works programmes(EPWP), community works programmes(CWP), mentorship, and youth business ventures (including issuing of trading licences for youth businesses);
- Implementation of credible IDP processes with active involvement of youth;
- Establishment of youth focal points within local municipalities responsible for youth mainstreaming;
- Ensure active participation of youth in local government structures and forums;
- Creation of youth enabling and responsive environment both within the municipal councils, and in the communities; and
- Lobby for increase in number of youths participating and represented within local government as councillors (mentorship programmes to encourage young people to participate).

Councillor Hlungwane remarked that current challenges and past experience have taught us that no single sphere of government can adequately address all elements of youth development and empowerment. This requires an intergovernmental and multi-sectoral approach that promotes the participation of young people as beneficiaries including inter-disciplinary and inter-organisational collaboration across sectors and spheres.

Councillor Hlungwane concluded that there are indicators that the Covid-19 pandemic will have a long lasting social, cultural and economic impact, particularly on our youth and therefore youth should be at the centre of addressing the pandemic and our economy.

## SESSION TWO

### 6. STATEMENTS: PROVINCES AND PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURES

Delegates from provincial legislatures and provinces were invited to make statements on key issues impacting youth in the respective provinces. Provincial representatives, utilising virtual platforms, raised a number of issues affecting youth that were common to all and those that were specific to their regions. All nine provinces put emphasis on the high rate of youth unemployment in the country, pointing out that this malaise has a potential of leaving the youth behind in terms of youth development and youth participation in the economy. The outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic according to the delegates has exacerbated the plight of South African youth and the response thereof by government does not seem to take the youth seriously as the most vulnerable group of the population.

Delegates commended the historical role played by the youth against colonialism and their involvement in the struggle against apartheid. Conversely, delegates lauded government's commitment in empowering the youth and making youth empowerment the centre of government activities. Such initiatives include youth representation in Parliament and provincial legislatures, free education and the social relief grant for the unemployed South Africans, who are mostly youth. In referring to the youth of 1976, delegates opined that the youth struggle didn't end then as today's youth is still fighting new battles such as unemployment, economic exclusion and the Covid-19 pandemic.

#### 6.1 EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE

Ms S Lusithi-Mani, the MEC for Social Development represented the Eastern Cape Province. She highlighted the fact that the challenges faced by youth today are different to those of the youth of 1976. High unemployment rates particularly amongst youth and a struggling economy may result in young people being left behind in education and socio-economic opportunities.

The Eastern Cape response on Covid is therefore centred on young people as they are most affected by the pandemic. In preparing an impactful and responsive strategy to the pandemic, the province is focussing on the marginalised and the vulnerable, particularly in rural areas. She remarked that the Covid-19 relief grant and other social relief interventions for the unemployed between the ages of 18 and 35, is a small dent in assisting the unemployed.

The Premier of the Eastern Cape Province has established a youth unit and formulated a youth development strategy aimed at empowering youth. To support youth entrepreneurial initiatives, the province has what it called the "*Isiqalo Fund*," *isiqalo* meaning "the start", to provide start-up capital for new businesses. The Eastern Cape government is encouraging young people to venture into farming among other activities particularly in view of the fact that Covid-19 has highlighted the issue of food security. The province has set aside about R200 million for the Youth Development Fund to assist young people in dealing with the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic in a variety of initiatives. Further support is provided for initiatives in all districts and the two metros in accordance with the District Development Model.

In addition, the Eastern Cape government is opening sectors previously closed to black people such as the property sector. This is in an attempt to ensure that the economy is more inclusive and that there is a deliberate targeting to support youth driven businesses.

## 6.2 FREE STATE PROVINCE

The MEC for Finance in the Free State Province, Mrs Gadija Brown reflected on the generational, gender-racial, socio-economic and economic inequality and adversity facing South Africans.

She called for unity among South Africans and the youth in particular in dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic and emphasised the need by departments to make it standard practice for all procurement to be 50% youth specific, arguing that this should also be the norm even in the private sector.

South Africa has made great strides in ensuring parity of women representation in key state posts. It is estimated that 30% of Parliaments around the world will be led by women. In the South African Cabinet, the President has targeted 50% representation of women. Provincial governments have similar targets. What about the LGBTQI community and their position on gender placement in the workforce? This necessitates a review of the definition of designated groups e.g. women, persons with disabilities, military veterans, etc.

It is important for the youth to envision their future and to also prepare themselves in response to what that future brings. The coming new world order put emphasis on engineering, robotics and the financial sector, and the youth of our country need to position themselves accordingly. She encouraged designated groups such as women and people with disabilities to also position themselves in the mainstream economy as active participants.

Digital currency is predicted to be the dominant currency as seen in China. In the same vein the methods of trade have transformed. Vast online shopping platforms e.g. EBay, Takealot, etc. are evidence of this. The future work for young people are clearly in engineering, robotics and the financial sector.

### **6.3 KWA-ZULU NATAL PROVINCE**

Hon K Meshengu, MPL, the MEC for Basic Education reflected on the historical courage, energy and ideas of youth to move things forward even in the face of adversity. Youth of today have the same power to move things forward even in the face of Covid-19.

However young people are systemically and structurally excluded in society and have become a symbol of unemployment, inequality and poverty. He warned that if youth still account for the largest number in substance abuse and gender based violence, they will have no power to grow South Africa. This has resulted in young people becoming increasingly angry because of systemic exclusion and frustration with no clear solutions being offered to succeed in life.

He stressed that we need young people to be vanguards in all areas of life as they have the power of being their own liberators.

### **6.4 LIMPOPO PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE**

Mr CDB Selane, MPL reflected on the tribal war that affected youth who challenged the colonial project which subsequently disenfranchised and dehumanised the black majority and excluded them from economic activities. 65 years on in Kliptown, the 1955 Freedom Charter was adopted, encapsulating the aspirations of the people of South Africa towards democracy and the freedom we enjoy today.

This Parliament must reflect on the challenges experienced by youth related to education, unemployment, poverty and violence. Despite the progress made since democracy, youth remain frustrated and struggle to access education and economic platforms. Youth must find innovative solutions to these barriers. Youth have a critical role to play in the construction and development of the country.

Young people are graduating in their majority but remain unemployed. Institutions of higher learning must provide the level of education that will transform our economy and realise the development agenda.

### **6.5 NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE**

Hon OJ Mokae, the youngest member of the Northern Cape Legislature, referred to the Youth Directorate in the Premier's Office and argued that this unit need to be adequately resourced and must report quarterly to the provincial legislature on its activities. The unit must also advocate targeted support for micro youth entrepreneurs in the informal economy and instill an entrepreneurial mind-set among youth. This includes expanding support and incentives for youth owned businesses and cooperatives.

The directorate also need to create youth opportunity centres across the province, where the youth will have access to information such as career guidance, job opportunities, and so forth.

To empower the youth, data must be available to all and the campaign for “Data for all” must be supported by everyone as it will be an empowering tool for youth. A petition to this effect has been prepared for submission to the President. He emphasized that access to the internet is a basic human right.

Employment tax incentives can result in increased youth employment. Youth owned businesses must not be side-lined. Support for small business is required to ensure that government achieves the NDP target for creating 11 million new jobs by 2030. Despite the lack of support, youth must rise and be proactive.

## 7.6 NORTH-WEST PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE

Hon V Motsumi, MPL, the Deputy Speaker of the North West Provincial Legislature reflected on the impact of Covid-19 on women, youth and persons with disabilities. The pandemic has resulted in growing job losses, the weakening economy and loss of life leaving a negative inheritance for the youth of South Africa.

Government’s efforts to issue relief funds to business, Covid-19 grants, and increase in social grant recipients to unemployed, children and senior citizens are providing some relief. She further recognised the critical role of essential services workers and lauded them for their support.

## 7.7 WESTERN CAPE PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE

Hon Ms D Baartman, MPL, in reflecting on the progress made by Estonia, emphasised the importance of Information and Communication Technological (ICT) skills for a developing country like South Africa pointing out that it must start with government in investing in ICT skills and training. Explaining how such skills with the right ICT infrastructure could change the way the country does business including improvements in the education sector as it uses digital platforms.

Some countries without the wealth associated with developed or rich countries, are already using digital platforms in the form of e-banking, e-voting, e-cabinet meetings, e-tax filing, etc. South Africa and its youth need to embrace e-government and digital skills training in preparation for the digital revolution.

She listed some of the innovation in the province such as mobile apps for agriculture, human settlements, online business toolkits, a paperless digital hospital, online health dashboards and online learning material for all grades as well as free Wi-Fi in public spaces and schools.

## SESSION 3

### 8. YOUTH FORMATIONS

A number of youth formations were invited to address youth concerns per sector. Amongst those presenting were the SA Youth Council, BMF, NYDA, Financial Sector, NUM, Tertiary Co-operative, LGBTQI+ and the Arts and Culture sectors.

#### 8.1 SA YOUTH COUNCIL

Mr T Sibiya the Head of Policy and Research representing the SA Youth Council, pointed out that the developmental state of South Africa will fail if the level of inequality continues to exist. He highlighted the perpetual poverty marginalised groups endured

The input from the SA Youth Council focused on how youth can play a role to curb the impact of the Covid -19 pandemic.

Further, the input alluded to issues to be addressed given the prevailing poverty, inequalities unfairness and distortion of reproduction of wealth. To this end, the presenter highlighted that the:

- 1) Industrial policy of the country needed to change;
- 2) State must drive an entrepreneurial economy;
- 3) State resources must be used for youth employment and job perseverance;
- 4) Local procurement of medical supplies by government must prioritise youth business;
- 5) Growth of a new economy are crucial to fight youth unemployment, suggesting that youth be employed in the PPE manufacturing sector;
- 6) Government needs to lower investment rates as this is needed by the country to generate growth, thus leading to job creation.
- 7) Financing of SMMEs could further assist to reduce unemployment.

#### 8.2 YOUTH IN BUSINESS SOUTH AFRICA

Ms S Sakuneka, the President of Youth in Business South Africa started her input by citing a quote “A county that does not value its youth has no future”. She emphasized that decisions, for youth should include youth for “without us, there is no hope”.

She encouraged the youth to take the struggle of today’s youth as the struggle of the youth of today is different from the youth of 1976 and largely premised on economic exclusion.

To revitalize the South African economy, support must be provided to youth and it is crucial to remove all barriers so that youth may qualify for entrepreneurship opportunities. Ms Sakuneka stressed the need to transform the school curriculum as the current one is outdated and does not prepare the youth for the 4IR.

### 8.3 SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL WOMEN'S FORUM

Speaking on behalf of the South African National Women's Forum, Ms N Maponopono stated that gender based violence is an issue that the progressive women's forum is paying attention to. The challenges faced by women in 1976, are still prevalent, basing this assertion on the intersectionality of race, class and gender as a growing phenomenon. The speaker asserted that education should give young people opportunities and made reference to Stats SA data. The statistics reveal that in terms of key prospects in the labor market, many young people are unable to participate in the economy, this stood at 59 % in 2019 and affected mainly the age group 15 – 24 years.

Youth unemployment indicates that the majority of the population is excluded from participating in the economy. Education is key to reducing unemployment. The lack of education makes it difficult for unemployed youth to participate in the economy and government should address this.

### 8.4 FINANCIAL SECTOR COALITION

Representing the Finance section Mr. S Mgolombane, encouraged the youth to respond positively to the clarion call of the Youth Parliament theme "Youth Power growing South Africa together in the time of Covid-19". The crisis calls for solidarity and requires youth to solidly stand behind government's fight against Covid -19. The presentation covered a range of financial and business investment strategies and proposals listed as follows:

- i) Government must create the opportunity to promote local procurement, across the economic cluster;
- ii) Small entities, such as stokvels must be given opportunities to participate in government supply chain;
- iii) PPE to allow the small business to participate thus creating economic opportunities;
- iv) Treasury to fund co-operatives;
- v) the economy to provide sustainable jobs;
- vi) At policy level, the introduction of a green paper that looks at strategies for infusing youth in approaches that blends financial, investor and business strategy and that builds the potential of youth is needed. This will ensure youth participation in business and the economy in general.

- vii) To increase sector growth, government must convene a Social Sector Summit that would help to integrate the plans, so that the financial sector is not left behind.

## 8.5 BMF YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

Perspectives shared by Mr. M Dube representing Western Cape young professionals alluded to the scarcity of black professionals at the top of the corporate ladder as symptomatic of a bigger problem of access to resources. There is a need to invest in black people leadership, promoting socio-economic cohesion and promote young leaders. Unintended consequences of the pandemic are that it is uncovering flaws which must be addressed. Paying attention to corporate SA is important for higher education if we want to see fundamental changes because the youth hinge on access to education to enter the corporate sector.

Citing relevant policies such as the Education Act 1997, NYDA, NFAS, etc. the presenter indicated that these are all measures to promote access to education, however they are not enough to redress the inequalities of the past in the corporate sector. South Africa is dealing with the redress of past discriminatory laws that hindered black people from accessing education. Tools to allow education is important. In addressing issues related to racial exclusion, Mr Dube assured the youth that the BMF deals with racism in the workplace. The presenter ended by sharing the BMF Post Covid -19 plan whereby young professionals will host a Summit for leadership and students, with the aim of deliberating on the pandemic, the changes it brought, unemployment in the country and to look at jobs for the future.

## 8.6 SOUTH AFRICAN YOUTH MOVEMENT TERTIARY COOPERATIVE

The presentation by Mr. T. Mmbegeni emphasized the important role of youth in co-operatives. Government must implement relevant legislation, the Co-operative Act (Act 14 of 2005 as amended in 2013), as it calls upon government to assist the vocational training centre's, in order to grow the economy. The presenter impressed upon the fact that Government must pay attention and support the SA youth movement in tertiary co-operatives, as they can become a major employer.

A key concern is that South Africa is not manufacturing its own technology in terms of the 4IR. The government should build more universities and colleges to meet the needs of the population. Education and training in agriculture must also be prioritised as food security is a key concern.

## 8.7 NUM YOUTH

In his opening statement, Mr B Mrasi, the National Secretary of NUM Youth, outlined that for too long, young people are finding it difficult to find employment and that this has worsened in the era of Covid - 19. Traversing towards post Covid – 19, it is important that employment of youth, the creation of

employment opportunities be identified in order to create social protection, particularly for youth who drop out of school and who have no means of participating in the economy.

Mr Mrasi made the following proposals to address these concerns:

- A social protection safety net for youth should be established to ensure that those who drop out of schools are not left to social ills.
- Youth must get a monthly grant allowance that will assist them in looking for jobs.
- Community innovation hubs must be created for young people to upskill themselves.
- Youth procurement should be prioritized.
- 15% of people employed in small companies should comprise of young people, whilst this figure should be 50% in bigger companies.
- Economic plans should be spearheaded by young people post COVID-19, particularly in the infrastructure sector.

## 8.8 EMBRACE DIVERSITY MOVEMENT

Presenter T Mokwati, the Head for Policy and Planning, highlighted to participants that it is inappropriate to identify LGBTQI+ people, with pronouns that evoke notions of disregard for gender sensitivity. Referring to LGBTQI+ community as Mr / Mrs or He/She is deemed impertinent. Mokwati asserted the concept They / Them as essential in acknowledging people's identity. People wishing to be identified as (they or them) should not be subject to cumbersome ways.

The presenter alerted that issues of gender identity and gender diversity are no laughing matter, with the evolution of the concept They / Them, people should embrace it. The LGBTQI+ community is part of South Africa and they need to be included in all aspects and decisions affecting their lives. Instead the LGBTQI+ community have been side-lined on issues facing youth. This has been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic as young LGBTQI+ find themselves homeless and left out of key decisions impacting them. The LGBTQI need to participate in decision making at all levels of government

The presiding officials recognized that respecting diversity is no debate, people need to respect gender nonconformity.

## 8.9 FREE STATE RAINBOW SEEDS QUEER CHANGE MAKERS MOVEMENT

They/Them L Mlabatheki concurred with the views expressed by the Embrace Diversity Movement and confirmed that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, LGBTQI+ people are homeless and are excluded from state assistance.

They observed that there is no LGBTQI+ representative in Parliament or government and called for the establishment of an LGBTQI+ department in the same way that a department dealing with Youth and Women exists.

There is a request for government programmes and budget to be set aside for LGBTQI as they are only reliant on funding from overseas. Furthermore, there is a need for people to be sensitised about LGBTQI.

## 8.10 TRAXTION SHELTA

Traxtion Sheltam focuses on teenage students to get an education, upskilling them to seize the opportunities available to improve their lives. Ms Z Simamane stressed that education for youth remains an important vehicle for empowerment.

Acknowledging the resonance and importance of upskilling artisans, the organization recognizes that this will yield economic growth, and lead to stimulation of employment of youth. Acknowledging the high unemployment rate of youth, creation of opportunities in the rail industry is considered the right direction to stimulate the economy, in particular road to rail. The railway industry must be opened up so that more jobs can be created in the sector

Resonating with the urgency of opening jobs, she pointed out that depression amongst youth leads to stress, substance abuse and many societal ills. In such circumstance youth should seek help. She concluded by calling on business to absorb unemployed youth.

## 8.11 CULTURAL AND CREATIVE INDUSTRIES FEDERATION OF SOUTH AFRICA

Alluding to the creative industry in the time of Covid-19, Ms A Roda for the Cultural Creative Industries Federation of South Africa (CCSFA) said that there should be openness when dealing with issues of diversity and gender. She called on the Youth Parliament to urge government and the corporate sector to create opportunities for freelancers in the creative arts industries and also to recognise arts and culture workers as professional workers.

She further emphasized these points pertaining to the creative industry:

- The creative industry is a dynamic job creator.
- The creative industry is also socially inclusive.
- The industry encourages openness in dealing with issues of diversity and gender.
- Rural communities lack funding for creative projects.
- SA youth are unaware of opportunities in the cultural industry and should be made aware of job and youth development opportunities in the sector.
- More funding models for arts and culture initiatives should be developed through SALGA.

## SESSION 4

### 9. STATEMENTS BY POLITICAL PARTIES

Political parties represented in Parliament were afforded the opportunity to make statements on issues impacting on youth.

#### 9.1 DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE

Representing the Democratic Alliance were Hon N Sharif, Hon B Nodada and Hon S Ngcobo.

Hon N Sharif reflected on the response of society to its women and highlighted the need to rip off this invisible social contract that tells women and the girl child that her life is expendable. We need to unpack every single layer that contributes to the surge of gender based violence and femicide. This starts at school when girls are told what to wear. This sets a destructive precedent between girls and their bodies as they grow up with the notion that a girl's body can be governed by others and not herself. This programmes the girl child to take precautions and responsibility to stay as safe as possible which places immeasurable pressure on young girls. Instead the focus should be to teach young boys to respect the autonomy of girls. Respect for autonomy must be far reaching and basic equality must be prioritised.

Hon B Nodada sees Youth Month as an opportunity to understand our past, acknowledge the present and own the future. He asserts that a government controls its people by not educating them or providing an inferior education or creating uncondusive environment for teaching and learning which entrenches dependency and perpetual poverty. He concludes that in post-apartheid South Africa, the battle of disrupting an unjust education system is not over as the majority of youth are subjected to an education system that are considered one of the worst in the word. This education will consign many to a lifetime of poverty.

There is a need to change the education syllabi to address the skills that South Africa needs and to create the opportunity for entrepreneurship.

Hon S Ngcobo reflected on the exclusion of persons with disabilities from many fora including the current Youth Parliament. The South African Human Rights Commission research brief on equality and disability statistics show that eight in ten persons with disabilities are unemployed, including youth with disabilities.

The White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities set the employment equity and work opportunity target for persons with disability at 7% by 2030. Current employment statistics suggest this target will not be met. Similarly, the public sector target for employment of persons with disabilities, set at 2% in 2005, has not been met 14 years later.

Hon Ngcobo further raised the shortage of special needs schools which contributes to youth unemployment. Research has further highlighted the discrimination children with visual disabilities experience in that learning material is not made available and levels of teaching are inadequate. This exacerbates the opportunities for youth with disabilities.

The government must seriously listen to the concerns of persons with disabilities.

Hon L Mphithi raised the question of space. There is a lack of space for young people to politically and economically occupy. The first battle for youth is to contend for space before owning it and the Youth Parliament provides an opportunity for this.

With more than 10 million unemployed and 55% of youth unable to find employment, change is needed to bring legitimacy to the democracy in South Africa. We need to break the stranglehold of extreme inequality that continue to prevail young people.

The National Youth Policy which must be tabled is being reviewed by the Minister for Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities without engaging this Youth Parliament. There is a need for decisive action in terms of the struggle for data as Covid-19 has highlighted the inability of youth to access the internet. Government must expand support and incentives for youth owned businesses and cooperatives.

He stressed that young people are asking “Do you hear me? Do you see me, do I matter?” Government has not responded and therefore young people must stand up for their own futures. This Youth Parliament session must have meaningful action plans.

## 9.2 ECONOMIC FREEDOM FIGHTERS

Ms I Kula speaking from the virtual platform, shared a message of dissatisfaction with the ruling state for the endless killing of the African child. Gender based violence should not be met with empty rhetoric.

Femicide and heinous atrocities of child abuse, should not only result in responsible men being brought to book but she called for the need to unpack the role of structural violence of an anti-black system and an untransformed state institution and the role they play in normalisation violence on black bodies.

Education remains a social good and responsibility. The EFF calls for free education for all and a radical decolonisation of the education system. The current curriculum celebrates Western epistemology and colonialism

There is a need for a radical shift in the economy as currently 31 % of graduates are unemployed and youth unemployment sits at 53,8%. Black Youth do not have access to capital and this will become more difficult as financial institutions would not want to take such risks. Government will need to ensure increased funding through the NYDA and other youth structures.

Ms Kula stated that to work the economy, land is required. Land must be expropriated without compensation and redistribute it equally to create the future we want.

Ms Kalu stressed that we need a capable state to deliver services to all and create jobs.

The government has failed to eradicate the scourge of drugs as it is failing to identify the lived conditions of young people. She reminded delegates that South Africa is part of a continent and that we have one future and need to build a society during and after Covid with strong socialist values.

### 9.3 FREEDOM FRONT +

Hon T Breedt, MP of the Freedom Front Plus, reflected on the greater uncertainty that the pandemic has introduced. Prior to Covid-19 the future was uncertain and the prospect of job opportunities were bleak. Covid has worsened this.

She implored the youth to focus on building a better future and that we all need to build a better South Africa. She concurred with Hon Lucas that we cannot carry out fundamental change without a certain level of madness. But stated that it is madness that the majority of school going learners do not have schooling in their mother tongue. In fact mother tongue education is reserved for the 7 % English speaking South Africans. IsiZulu is the most spoken language in South Africa but there is no isiZulu tertiary institution.

Hon Breedt stated that the youth of today and leaders of tomorrow have the power to fundamentally change the South African landscape. Whilst she recognises that the youth are frustrated, they need to push government to create an environment for equal opportunities and economic growth that will create job opportunities.

Youth must celebrate the past and celebrate the diversity of South Africa but must ensure that history does not repeat itself.

### 9.3 ACDP

**Hon L Luthuli**, MP raised concerns around the unemployment amongst youth and many of these are graduates. He reflected on the increase in the number of black professionals emigrating which is now exceeding that of white citizens emigrating. Stats SA statistics show that more than 97 000 young South Africans have emigrated since 2006, these mainly between the ages of 18 and 35.

He queried why there is a reluctance particularly amongst the youth to vote. Youth are disenchanted with voting as they do not see the fruits thereof and this is mainly due to the increase in corruption.

Youth require the encouragement of positive role models and servant leaders to bring back the appetite to be part of the South African solution.

As a solution, Hon Luthuli referred to the available funding for wards that can be used to train unemployed youth as plumbers, electricians, carpenters, mechanics as the Western Cape has some of the best artisans in these areas.

#### 9.4 UDM

Mr Y Zigebe, MP representing the UDM, saluted the sterling work done by frontline and health care workers fighting the pandemic.

The UDM lauded the inception of the Youth Parliament in 2011, as it allowed youth the opportunity to raise a number of issues impacting them such as economic participation, prejudice, inequality, racism, sexism, classism, ableism and unemployment. Despite this platform, youth are still seeking solutions to the same problems as government has not been serious about solving challenges faced by youth.

Despite 26 years of democracy, South Africa ranks as one of the most unequal societies in the world. The UDM proposes that we need young people in decision making bodies – not token appointments.

Youth unemployment has increased dramatically due to Covid-19 but the pandemic has further revealed the lack of innovation. South Africa needs an economic repositioning focussing on youth and skills development.

Youth must traverse barriers that hamper their progress. This includes an education system that does not adequately prepare youth for the future. Instead it generates dropouts and perpetual job seekers. He suggested that the education system requires a massive overhaul. The education system should build job creators, innovators, artisans, those who work the land and produce food.

Government must hire those it invested in and eliminate NSFAS debt for those who have been unemployed for more than 5 years.

#### 9.5 GOOD

Ms P Jacobs joined the session on the virtual platform. In quoting “We cannot always build a future for youth but we can build a youth for the future.”, she stressed that youth play a critical role as change agents. Particularly in relation to incidents of sexual abuse at school, youth can play a key role to address this scourge.

The impact of the current lockdown may permanently lock youth out of the economy if youth themselves do not address this. She encouraged youth to support communities and to make use of the informal sector.

However, data and access to technology hampers youth entrepreneurs. The price of data must fall as presently it prevents youth from submitting online application, access to research and information.

There is a need for a lower rate of data for low income areas and schools. Youth can be assisted through innovative community based programmes through partnership between civil society organisations and government. There are many examples of entrepreneurial youth ventures which displays the resilience of our youth. Youth should amplify their voices and become part of the solution that will take South Africa out of this pandemic.

#### 9.6 NFP

Ms T Mohamed-Fakier reflected on the unemployment rate for youth aged 15 to 24 which sat at 59% at the end of the first quarter of 2020. This translates to 6 out of every 10 youth who are unemployed. These figures would look differently with the lockdown.

Despite the deep rooted systemic problems in South Africa, she told youth that we cannot do nothing. The school curriculum does not make youth employable in the future and there is insufficient tertiary capacity to accommodate all youth in South Africa. The affordability of tertiary education is a further barrier to build youth capacity. South African tertiary education has become a luxury when it is supposed to be a basic right.

Youth from lower income households' barriers are multiplied with no stable internet connections, a quiet place to work or study, access to a computer, a secure space to store computers and access to electricity. With no access to these support structures, most youth are frustrated and lured to illegal activities which often results in increased violence against women and children.

She encouraged the youth to create better solutions, to be accountable and responsible for their futures and to empower a new South Africa.

#### 9.7 AIC

The AIC, represented by Mr A Mbizafa indicated that the shortage of resources for youth worsens the number of unemployed. In addition, the lockdown grant has proven not to be sufficient. Government expenditure is not directed to youth but to tenderpreneurs who are not able to build structures to accommodate South Africa. By way of example, he explained that South Africa does not have an issue with the availability of water but what is an issue is the continued deterioration of infrastructure to secure water.

The South African education system must be realigned to address the needs of the youth of today not the needs of 1994. Rural development must be prioritised as there are no real programmes to address youth in rural areas. Agriculture seems to be the only area that is supported but this too, favours the affluent.

Parliament needs to look at debt management of graduates who are unable to find meaningful employment.

## 9.8 PAC

The PAC representative expressed concern that despite democratic changes, English and Afrikaans monopolise African languages. Mother tongue language education which was fought for in 1976 was not fully realised with the result that many youth are left behind. In addition labour laws do not protect unskilled labour.

South Africa requires a change in social culture.

## 9.9 ATM

Ms C Moji lamented the fact that there is no material change in the lives of black people.

Black youth have no access to the economy. The number of businesses that closed down during the lockdown period has dramatically pushed the unemployment rate, particularly for youth, higher. Key institutions such as NYDA, are not fulfilling their roles to protect South African youth and must be reviewed.

The ATM proposes that Parliament introduce laws to resuscitate the economy. In addition, it is important to ring-fence the informal economy, which serves as a primary source of livelihood of many previously disadvantaged communities, for South African youth. Government needs to formalise policies to protect trade in the informal economy

## 9.9 AL 'JAMA-AH

Mr T Eli echoed the problems faced by youth on the Cape Flats and in townships where gangsterism, drug abuse, crimes such as femicide are increasing at an alarming rate and socio economic conditions degenerated.

Al' Jama-ah called for a basic universal grant for all unemployed. He echoed the theme of there is no freedom without economic freedom and encouraged youth to grab the opportunities the Fourth Industrial Revolution brings with it. There is an opportunity for new jobs and new revenue streams.

The mission of this generation of youth should be focused on transforming the economy.

## 9.10 COPE

Ms S Sijadu – due to technical difficulties the speaker could not present the statement but was requested to mail the input.

## 9.11 IFP

Hon MN Nxumalo, MP highlighted that young people are more active in the informal sector but Covid has impacted this negatively. Government, the NYDA and other youth structures need to step up. She stressed that we cannot grow South Africa together when our society remains deeply unequal and when rural children are forgotten. Young people do not have access to internet, computers, gadgets, access to online portals and so forth.

She questioned the decision of the Department of Basic Education for re-opening schools during the lockdown period as the safety of learners and educators could not be guaranteed. This further disadvantages the black rural school child who does not have access to online learning resources. Over and above this, many communities still do not have access to basic services such as water and sanitation.

Due to the lack of government responsiveness, she encouraged youth to through self-help and self-reliance lift themselves out of poverty, to act in the spirit of Ubuntu and to rewrite the narrative of youth.

## 9.13 ANC

The ANC was represented by two representatives namely Hon S Mkize, MP and Hon J Mananiso, MP.

Hon Mkize focussed on young women who lost their lives due to gender based violence. SAPS research estimated that a woman is raped every 36 seconds and that 40% of men assault their partners daily in South Africa. Often violence against women is justified and like racism, gender based violence is embedded in the fabric of our society.

Against this backdrop Covid arrived and despite the negative impact thereof, it also presents opportunities for South Africa. There is an opportunity to review the economic framework to ensure that we build the economy to create jobs as capitalism, as the seat of many social ills, led to inequality along racial and gender lines. There should be greater focus in investing in health, education and human settlements.

Furthermore, she highlighted the need to take a deliberate decision to rescue the income gap. To address this in part, the role of the Reserve Bank should be reviewed to be a more developmental and focussing on job creation. Land redistribution should also be expedited.

Hon J Mananiso in responding to previous inputs categorically stated that the 1994 project did not fail as this Youth Parliament is evidence of the participation of youth, who were previously disenfranchised.

She noted that the ruling party made strides in terms of youth development but more needs to be done. She concurred with previous speakers that:

- the land must be shared;
- we must have free education;
- strengthen public private partnerships in favour of youth;

- procurement in government and private sector to be set aside for youth; and
- there must be special funding for arts.

In addition, she agreed that all provinces should have a uniform constitutional arrangement for youth units. Hon Mananiso stressed the need to promote “buy local” and “grow local” economy. In addition, the District Model could be used to invest in digital infrastructure.

The National Youth Policy is currently under review and youth are to be consulted on this.

She argued for the mainstreaming of youth with disabilities in schools and not special schools, to ensure that they benefit from the same education. Perpetrators of gender based violence should not benefit from economic opportunities and a register of such offenders should be maintained

Transformation is not just about ticking the box; we should see young men and women in key positions. To this end they must be empowered as professionals, with the necessary skills and be made part of the economy.

She reminded young parliamentarians and other public representatives to ensure that as part of their oversight work, they incorporate the proposals and recommendations made here today and to hold government to account.

She recognised that young people are ready to take their space in South Africa and that it was also the responsibility of young people, using youth power to grow South Africa together.

## SESSION 5

### 10. INTERACTIVE SESSION

The last plenary for the day was co-chaired by Honourable X. Nqola, MP and Mr. I Ntsube, MP. Akin to other plenaries, session five was a combination of interactive discussions and comments from the chamber and virtual participants. Some of the fundamental themes that reverberated in all the previous sessions were reiterated during this sitting e.g. the role of the youth in fast-tracking economic growth, development and participation, education, employment opportunities and entrepreneurship to mention a few.

A number of youth constructions observed that they were the country’s largest populace yet felt excluded and marginalised in the decision making process primarily on matters that affect them. Youth joblessness and lack of economic opportunities were particularly heightened as the most pressing challenge(s) that required urgent government intervention. A lack of involvement of this dynamic segment of society in the labour force, though, not always by choice, has many negative implications on the lives of youths, the economy as well as society in general.

It is particularly troublesome because when it is so high, it can have lasting effects on lifetime of employability through the depreciation of skills and can be the source of political instability. It was

therefore unsurprising that a consistent reflection from various youth formations was the fact that the engagement of youth in development has been inconsistent and at best unpredictable. Hence, the recommendation and endorsement by many that the Youth Parliament should be held twice a year, with build-ups from provinces and local government level.

The Chairperson, Hon Nqola, reminded Members that they were each given strictly two minutes to make their contribution. The contributors were segmented into two, those in the chamber administered by Hon Nqola and those that were joining virtually under the guidance and direction of Hon Ntsube. Hon Nqola furthermore reminded esteemed members that this day, 26 June, coincided with a colourful and eventful day of 26 June 1955 where more than 3000 delegates congregated at Kliptown, Johannesburg, to adopt the people's Freedom Charter, a crucial foundation for our country's Constitution.

### **Inputs from the Chamber**

The first input from Unathi Mutshewkane of the South African Youth Council took issue with the R10 billion expenditure over the period of five years by the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition on film incentives which appeared to favour foreign productions. While South African beneficiaries, six recipients from Western Cape to be precise, were predominantly white owned. He furthermore lamented employers who still demand work experience from recent graduates when President Ramaphosa has recently announced and made a commitment that experience would no longer be a requirement. Lastly, he called on Cricket South Africa (CSA) to accelerate transformation of the sport both on the field and at the boardroom level.

The second and fourth speakers from the Economic Freedom Fighters were particularly concerned with school infrastructure backlog that do not meet the basic safety norms and standards, calling for the Minister of Basic Education to be held accountable for the lives lost as a result of dilapidated infrastructure, including pit toilets. One speaker bemoaned the dearth of support for youth owned enterprises by the Department of Small Business Development, citing youth owned businesses that were dying in numbers due to a lack of appropriate financial and nonfinancial (knowledge) support. While the other presenter underscored the importance of education and the need to move away from a colonial education to build the African child to solve the problems of the African child. A further issue was that of mental health of youth with a focus on African indigenous health practices. A further issue raised was gender equality as one of the fundamental necessities to achieve social, political and economic development goals.

The third delegate to contribute on behalf of the Congress of South African Students made reference to the forthcoming National Youth Policy, with specific reference to how do the youth become more solutions oriented, challenging the youth to focus on what builds, encouraged youth to tell their stories and find platforms to air their messages. According to the delegate, one of the critical conversations the youth could have should be about the huge numbers of youth with no education, no employment, no skills and basic training. The rise of the "missing middle" requires government and business to make concessions to address this.

The fifth speaker representing the African Christian Democratic Party was for the most part concerned with collaborative efforts being done with religious organisations in upskilling, training and mentoring youth of this country. She observed that civic organisations and religious formations were not being included in the programme.

The sixth delegate to speak from the IFP enquired from delegates who attended the previous Youth Parliament sessions what resolutions were taken and what progress had been registered in terms of implementing those resolutions. She cautioned members that if those resolutions were not tracked and effected, delegates might be back here again in future with little or no tangible progress being achieved.

The seventh speaker from the United Democratic Movement youth vanguard pleaded with Parliament to ensure that this session of the Youth Parliament be held twice a year and to invite the Department of Employment and Labour to engage and answer questions of the youth pertaining to the high youth unemployment rate. The youth vanguard further called for the regulation of professional bodies such as those administering engineers. Youth and recent graduates are being coerced to register and affiliate with these bodies. Parliament needs to look at this.

The eighth speaker also from the UDM youth vanguard voiced his concern that pupils are being sent back to classrooms even though others have tested positive for Covid-19 yet the Minister of Basic Education was not even in Parliament, as well as the “recycling of Ministers” which if at all possible should give way for younger and energetic Ministers. Government must consider how it engages with stakeholders, including youth.

The ninth, tenth, eleventh and last speaker from the Chamber from COSAS and ANC Youth League made reference to a number of subjects from acknowledging the contributions of the youth of 1976 for having conquered and overthrown the oppressive system, the youth of “Fees must fall” movement which fought a significant battle to remove a systemic blockage that prevented youth from entering institutions of higher learning to challenges confronting the youth of 2020, most notably lack of access to information owing to high data costs. Youth formations must not only enquire about policies government must put in place, but youth should also be willing to determine what they need to do to set a fertile ground for the implementation of these policies. Like the youth of 1976 were change makers, youth today need to be willing to implement these policies.

The youth applauded the ANC for making significant inroads on issues of women empowerment. However, the brutal killings of young women and sex for marks were among some many social ills the youth of this country must root out. We must also learn from the LGBTQI community to ensure that youth respect each other.

## **Inputs from Virtual Participants**

The second part of session five was co-chaired by Hon Ntsube and nineteen presenters indicated their intent to contribute. The principle of giving non-members priority was once more emphasised. One remarkable obstacle to note during this session was that most participants wrestled with internet connectivity, confirming a key theme of lack of access to viable broadband. The first speaker to contribute from the virtual platform, Hon Morati, emphasised the role and inclusion of LGBTQI community and people living with disabilities in all governance structures, as well as youth inclusion in Parliament and Cabinet. Lastly, he enquired from the Member of the Legislature in Northern Cape regarding the establishment of Youth Opportunity Centres if there were timeframes attached to their establishments.

The second presenter Hon Z Mdudo's inputs impressed upon youth employment, eradication and decolonisation of education. The third speaker, Hon Nanto queried the progress recorded towards implementing preceding Youth Parliament resolutions and recommendations. He highlighted the absence of Ministers from the Youth Parliament as a missed opportunity, considering the responsibility they have to account what their ministries are doing for the youth.

The next presenters from the virtual platform, called themselves the Youth Troop, felt Youth Parliament was not adequately tackling issues affecting teenagers, for instance, racism at schools, teenage pregnancy and inclusion and representation of "young" youth in the future Parliament. The fifth speaker, Hon Jacobs, implored Parliament to involve youth in all issues that affects them, most importantly education, and for Parliament to exercise rigorous oversight of the basic education sector while assuring teacher capacitation.

The sixth speaker, Hon Wettles, struggled with internet connectivity but contributed with reference to embracing youth from remote rural areas. Hon Kganyago as speaker number seven raised the concern of unemployed graduates and echoed the nationwide call to abolish tuition fees and cancellation of student historical debt especially for unemployed graduates. Hon Mbutho recapped sentiments raised by previous respondents concerning LGBTQI challenges that are peculiar to their community and need specific attention, particular financial or developmental assistance from government, queer representation in Parliament, access to institutions of higher learning and basic health care – but they confront the same hardship experienced by all young South Africans.

Honourable S Movo lamented government's lack of implementation. He specifically referred to the National Youth Development Agency for having failed the youth of this country to inculcate a robust culture of entrepreneurship and general lack of support to promising business ventures. He bemoaned NYDA funding of well-established business people, money that could have been channelled to youth development.

Honourable Kasibe, the tenth speaker, flagged institutionalised racism in the education sector, while school learners are being discriminated against. He questioned the existence of Orania in a democratic dispensation as emblematic of a deep-rooted racism problem in South Africa. He furthermore

cautioned that all racist projects such as Orania have no place in a post-apartheid society and called upon the Youth Parliament to adopt a recommendation and/or resolution that all colonial symbols must be removed.

Hon Norobolo from African Transformation Movement (ATM) Youth League criticised the lack of diversification of the country's Constitution. She castigated government's failure to reduce youth unemployment, particularly of graduates, and called for an institutionalisation of "South Africa First" policy. This is why the ATM advocate for the reserving of the micro economy for South Africans only. The government has a responsibility to confront systemic exclusion of Khoisan people, and those living with disabilities and albinism.

The next speaker, Honourable S Mpelo, called for the transformation of Parliament, to be more inclusive of youth representation and the extermination of Roman Dutch law that still administers our parliamentary and legal system. She stressed the need to deal with land restoration and not land expropriation. She also called for white enclaves such as Orania to be outlawed and all apartheid symbols to be removed. When empowering young people, the focus should be to promote independence as opposed to dependency. The pandemic shows that most South Africans have suffered under the pandemic of hunger, not only for food but key resources such as access to data and the internet.

Honourable Sijadu referred to the President's state of the nation address where numerous promises were made to emancipate youth and young women in particular and enquired how many of these were implemented. She denounced the lack of consultation when the National Youth Policy was developed, while further noting that Eastern Cape government has gone bankrupt, and directed the COGTA Minister to respond why the Nelson Mandela Bay metropolitan still remains without a mayor.

Speaker number fourteen was Honourable S Ganda from the Good Party. He said more must be done to revitalise township economies. Over the past decade, the development of townships into more economically and socially sustainable communities has been the subject of growing interest in South Africa. However, such interest has not been matched with tangible investments that transform townships into industrial sites. There was therefore room for improvement by national and provincial governments to deliberately target township development.

The next representative from the EFF Student Command Hon X Mehlomakhulu called on all youth formations to prioritise the deletion of colonial structures and statues in our Parliament. He condemned the lack of school infrastructure, while young people's lives were being put at risk due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

Hon D Daniels from the Good Party expressed her dismay at a highly visible endemic gender-based violence that affect women and children each day. With easing of lockdown this scourge appeared to have gained much impetus notwithstanding President Cyril Ramaphosa having declared femicide a national crisis in September 2019. She enquired from the President and Parliament as to where the gender based plan promised by the President during 2019 was. She further raised the increase of teenage suicide and what was being done about this.

Hon A Jabavu from the UDM youth structure queried the relevance of the NYDA and SAYC, in light of the number of young voters who participate in democratic elections that has steadily declined. He reiterated earlier recommendations to have this session held biannually so that structures such as the NYDA and SAYC, instead of reporting to government, can report direct and openly to the youth of this country.

Honourable A Peko challenged the youth of this country to venture for meaningful positions in society. He additionally railed the government for not putting an effort to support civil society formations and non-profit organisations. He cautioned the government to be more circumspect as the youth of this country is becoming more and more exasperated with government ineptitude and inefficiency. Honourable A Katabazi who made general remarks about how the program from the Youth Parliament and discussions progressed and that youth should focus to be part of the solution. Hon M Soji was the last speaker and proposed that we redefine the age criteria for job seekers. He further highlighted the abuse of interns.

## 11. CLOSING

Hon Lucas informed the Youth Parliament that we have listened to the youth that is our future and hope. She recognised that whilst Covid is a threat, there is a lot of opportunity as evidenced by the virtual hybrid platform used for the Youth Parliament.

She noted the many inputs and issues raised around education, unemployment, employment opportunities, funding etc. These will be captured in a report and a session will be scheduled with responsible ministers to address and respond to the issues raised by the youth.

She stressed that some areas can be addressed to build a capable country where respect, kinship, kindness and the correct attitude is nurtured. Remarking on the fact that South Africa has become a violent society especially considering gender based violence, she implored the current generation to bring a change in our country.

She recognised that there is a common language developing within the needs and challenges experienced by youth and that together we need to coin solutions. The same delegates will be invited to have an open session with government to secure the future of SA in the hands of the current generation.

Hon Lucas closed the session expressing her gratitude for the participation and presence of the Executive of all three spheres as well as all Members at national and provincial level as well as Councillors and in particular the support of all political parties for the Youth Parliament 2020.

## 12. SUMMARY OF KEY CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 12.1 CHALLENGES

- a) Youth unemployment is very high and the economy of the country excludes the youth despite some being graduates.
- b) COVID-19 has further increased youth unemployment.
- c) Rural communities lack funding for creative projects.
- d) SA youth are unaware of opportunities in the cultural industry.
- e) Jobs still want experience after the president has announced that experience should no longer be a hindrance when youth is looking for employment opportunities.
- f) There is poor or selective assistance from the NYDA where by those already in an advantaged posture continued to be funded.
- g) The current education system does not prepare the youth for the 4IR industrial revolution.
- h) The education system is anti-black.
- i) There's a lot of racism in schools that needs to be dealt with.
- j) The education system creates job seekers instead of job creators and needs to be reviewed and amended.
- k) The education curriculum does not respond to African problems
- l) COVID-19 has just exposed the extreme inequalities in terms of the country's basic education, whereby children in affluent schools have access to online learning and those from rural areas are left behind.
- m) Data is too expensive for students
- n) There is a rise in Gender based violence and femicide in the country.
- o) The LGBTQI is not represented in government legislation and are also denied on economic opportunities
- p) Transformation in the sport, arts and culture industry is still lacking.

### 12.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 12.2.1 YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

- a) Decisions on youth should not be taken without youth participation in such discussions.
- b) Youth entrepreneurship must be prioritized by all spheres of government.
- c) Youth should enjoy being prioritized in government procurement.
- d) COVID-19 has increased unemployment and the youth should be involved in economic decisions on the forging a way forward to the country.

- e) Government should ensure that 40% of the supply chain procurement is allocated to youth and young MPs must ensure that the policy on youth procurement is implemented when doing oversight.
- f) The roles of youth structures such as the NYDA should be reviewed.
- g) The creative industry is a dynamic job creator, socially inclusive and needs to be supported more.
- h) More funding models for arts and culture initiatives should be developed through SALGA.
- i) Experience should not be a hindrance to youth employment.
- j) Data must be cheap and accessible to all the youth as it will enable them to seek economic opportunities.
- k) Youth should be prioritized in land redistribution process.
- l) The sport, arts and culture industry must be reviewed.

#### 12.2.2 YOUTH ACCESS TO EDUCATION

- a) The education system must be amended to create job creators as opposed to job seekers.
- b) The education curriculum should be developed in such a way that it addresses African problems.
- c) Education should focus on developing critical thinking skills among learners, instead of just focusing on the pass rate.
- d) The debt relief for graduates who are unemployed must be considered.

#### 12.2.3 YOUTH AND GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

- a) The youth should address gender based violence, femicide, and racism as seen recently through awareness campaigns and holding the state to account.
- b) Young girls should be protected from being exploited by male educators in exchange for academic favours.
- c) Government needs to speed up its policy on gender based violence.

#### 12.2.4 LGBTQI+

- a) Government must include LGBTQI representation in policy making and make development funding available.

#### 12.2.5. YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES

- a) Youth with disabilities must be mainstreamed into the current schooling system to produce equality.

#### 12.2.6 YOUTH AND SOCIETY

- a) Mental health among the youth is a serious concern and needs to be addressed.
- b) African indigenous medicine needs to be considered and recognised as healing agents

#### 12.2.7. YOUTH, PARLIAMENT AND THE EXECUTIVE

- a) Ministers and DGs should also attend the Youth Parliament so that they can answer the concerns of the youth within their respective portfolios.
- b) Young parliamentarians must pursue oversight over the executive on youth related matters.
- c) Parliament must host the Youth Parliament twice a year to ensure that there is participation from local and provincial level culminating in an annual Youth Parliament and followed by a feedback session where Members of the Executive have to account to the youth for what they was done to address the resolutions of the Youth Parliament.

### 13. RESOLUTIONS PER PORTFOLIO AND FOCUS AREAS

#### 13.1 Youth, Covid-19 and the Economy

The Youth Parliament noted that COVID-19 has amplified the challenges facing the youth. The economy is on a decline thereby shedding jobs, most of which will be in the services sector where youth employment is most prominent. Statistics South Africa reported that in the first quarter of 2019, the youth between the ages of 15–24 years were the most affected by unemployment, with an unemployment rate of 55,2 per cent.<sup>1</sup> Statistics South Africa further reported that 31 per cent of graduates in this age group were unemployed. COVID-19 will deepen the struggle for employment opportunities and prospects for better lives.

However, there are opportunities that have been leveraged from the support provided because of the pandemic. In response to COVID-19, the government has implemented measures to control imports and exports of goods that are needed for the fight against the pandemic in terms of the Disaster Management Act No. 57 of 2002. The purpose of the import and export controls is to ensure that products that are needed to limit the spread of the Covid-19 are easily available in the country and are used for treating patients including products such as disinfectants, alcohol based sanitisers,

---

<sup>1</sup> Statistics South Africa (2019)

facemasks, gas masks, antisera and other blood fractions, vaccines for human medicine, and medicines.<sup>2</sup> This provides an opportunity for local manufacturing of these goods and there is government support available for local manufacturing.

Submissions from the Youth Parliament suggest that government support should also be directed towards the youth, through supporting micro and small enterprises:

Submissions from the Youth Parliament suggest that government support should also be directed towards the youth, through supporting micro and small enterprises that manufacture Personal Protective Equipment and other goods needed to fight the spread of COVID-19. The proposals to government included

- (a) Ensuring support to youth-owned local enterprises through the procurement of personal protective equipment and other medical supplies during the COVID-19 pandemic from such enterprises.
- (b) Promoting youth businesses in the agricultural sector and the green economy. Creating opportunities and supporting the agricultural sector, particularly the youth in this sector because the COVID-19 pandemic has increased the need for food security in the country.
- (c) Prioritising local manufacturing and limiting imports of computers, computer equipment, and related goods whose demand has increased in this time of COVID-19 pandemic. In this regard, the government should support the local manufacturing of these goods to grow the South African economy.
- (d) Prioritise the participation of micro and small enterprises (SMEs) during COVID-19 as well as centralise support for SMEs.

### 13.2 Youth and Unemployment

The high rate of unemployment in South Africa is worsened by the Covid-19 pandemic. Unemployment in South Africa is rife, it does not only affect those that are less educated as it also affects the educated, with tertiary education and qualifications. Statistics show that the group most affected by unemployment include Africans, females, in rural areas.

---

<sup>2</sup> Department of Trade and Industry (2020).

**Submissions from the Youth Parliament suggested that government should: (Bold this section similar to the above section)**

- (a) Consider an unemployment grant for all unemployed citizens. This is required beyond what is available during the COVID-19 pandemic (Relief grant).
- (b) The government should provide a grant for youth that are looking for work. Job seekers require money to cover the cost of internet services, preparing a CV and sending CVs to prospective employers etc.
- (c) A COVID-19 relief grant for the unemployed should be received by all who qualify for it. The government should fast-track the implementation of this.
- (d) Economic integration from learnerships to leadership jobs. There should be a transition strategy for the youth in internships to move to jobs. After the internship has expired rather than joining the unemployment pool again, people should be placed in companies.
- (e) Open up government infrastructure to private companies that support the employment of youth. This will create jobs for the youth and stimulate the economy.
- (f) Equip the youth for future jobs. The Fourth Industrial Revolution is creating change that requires flexibility as well as new skills.

### **13.3 Youth and the Economy**

The South African economy is challenged with structural inhibitors to its growth and it becoming an inclusive economy. Still, many South Africans do not participate in certain economic activities such as owning a business. They are still confined to employment. In an economy that is declining it is important that the youth become owners of businesses and become creators of employment rather than being job seekers. In this regard, the industrial policy and strategy should be prioritised for implementation and the focus on sectors of the economy should coupled with a focus on the vulnerable groups in the economy such as the youth and women. There should be more support for youth in the manufacturing sector.

**Submissions from the Youth Parliament suggested that government should:**

- (a) Finalise the development of the strategy for the Township Economy and implement it.

- (b) Support initiatives for the youth to participate particularly Youth in the informal and Township economies.
- (c) Develop Youth specific incentive support programmes, similar to the targeted support provided by the National Empowerment Fund (NEF) for black entrepreneurs.
- (d) Improve incentives for the creative sector including the informal creative sector.
- (e) Reconsider the film and television sector support by the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (DTIC) to ensure that it supports the youth and local companies. Over R10 billion has been spent on overseas companies in the film industry in South Africa. Prioritise our South African owned businesses in providing both non-financial and financial support over multinationals.
- (f) Ensure that the youth participate throughout the value chain rather than in certain parts of the value chain. This also includes participation in all sectors of the economy to ensure that there is inclusiveness in the economy.
- (g) The government should look into the high cost of data. Develop strategies in collaboration with the private sector to reduce the cost of data for purposes of education and small businesses.

### 13.4 Youth and Local Public Procurement

The government has introduced local public procurement legislation in the form of the Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act of 2000. The Act is based on section 217 of the Constitution, which state “procurement by organs of state in the national, provincial or local sphere of government, or any other institution identified in national legislation, must occur in accordance with a system which is fair, equitable, transparent, competitive and cost-effective”. The Constitution allows for organs of state to implement a procurement policy in which government determines and designate goods for local procurement. The government is required to procure all designated products from local manufacturers, thereby creating opportunities for growth in the local manufacturing sector.

This piece of legislation encourages government to procure goods and services from local suppliers as well as small suppliers to ensure development and localisation. This piece of legislation is currently

under review and amendment. In February 2020 the Minister of Finance, Mr. Tito Mboweni published the draft Amendment Bill for public comment.<sup>3</sup>

The Youth Parliament raised concerns that government continues to procure goods and services from large enterprises and even import rather than buying locally produced goods. While it acknowledged that there are some pockets of excellence, it noted that more needs to be done to facilitate the growth of the youth-owned and small enterprises.

The Preferential Procurement Regulations, require “organs of state to identify tenders, where it is feasible, to sub-contract a minimum of 30% of the value of the contract for contracts above R30 million’, to among others, Exempted Micro-Enterprises (EMEs) or Qualifying Small Enterprises (QSE)<sup>4</sup> with a minimum of 51 per cent black youth ownership”<sup>5</sup>.

Submissions from the Youth Parliament suggested that:

- a) Youth should benefit from government set-asides in government procurement.
- b) Procurement quotas for youth should apply to not only the public but also the private sector.
- c) Government must promote a culture of making foods locally and buying locally among South Africans.
- d) Government must ensure 50% participation of youth in procurement programmes. In this regard, government should procure 50% of its goods and services from youth-owned local enterprises.
- e) Government must further consider developing legislation that will ensure that the private sector also procures 50% of its goods from youth and local enterprises.
- f) Enterprises must get contracts only if they can demonstrate that 25% of employees are youth and are in the employ of the enterprises. This must apply to SMMEs as well.
- g) On the local procurement of goods, government should establish a task team to make sure that SMMEs, cooperatives and stokvels are given an opportunity to participate in the value chain and procurement of essential goods in the economy post COVID 19.

---

<sup>3</sup> National Treasury (2020)

<sup>4</sup> Exempted Micro-Enterprises (EMEs) are entities that generate an annual turnover of R0 and less R10 million. Qualifying Small Enterprises (QSEs) are entities that have an annual turnover of above R10 million and less R50 million.

<sup>5</sup>National Treasury (2017)

### 13.5 Youth and access to finance and credit

Access to credit continues to be one of the major challenges in South Africa and among the South African youth. The contributors to the limited access to credit include the cost of credit as well as the requirements for accessing credit among others. These inhibit the youth from taking up business opportunities and expanding existing small businesses, many of which go out of business within 2 years of inception with the lack of access to finance as one of the major contributors (Small Enterprise Development Agency, 2019).

In terms of government funding, there is an acknowledgment of the support provided by the government to small businesses, however, the incentives are said not to go far enough to meet the needs of the business in the country. Because a large share of the youth is unemployed, the alternative is starting a business, which requires financing. However, there is often stringent requirement, which the applicants have to comply with to access the incentives. As a result, a large number of people are unable to access incentives, in particular the youth and those in the informal sectors of the economy.

The Youth Parliament participants raised the following:

- a) Post COVID 19 it will be difficult for black youth entrepreneurs to operate. Black youth do not have access to capital and it will be even harder as financial institutions are not willing to process access to finance due to risk profiling.
- b) Government should ensure improved access to finance for youth, women, persons with disabilities and those in the rural areas and informal sector.
- c) Government must further look into the high cost of credit particularly for small businesses, for youth to participate in the economy, credit should be accessible.
- d) Government should consider creating a state bank that will address the challenges of lack of access to finance for micro and small medium enterprises and youth-owned enterprises.
- e) In order to revitalise the economy youth entrepreneurship is the solution.
- f) Government should introduce special funding for the Creative and Cultural industry including provision of access to resources and funding for businesses in rural areas in the sector.
- g) Participants questioned why funds are given to people with established businesses instead of young entrepreneurs.
- h) Although education and skills development is one of the services offered by the NYDA, young people stated that the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) has no programme to help young people formulate successful business plans before they submit applications for funding.
- i) A concern around diversity in relation to beneficiaries of funding from development finance institutions was raised. Young people noted that funding that was allocated for the film industry was given to companies from overseas and three white South African companies.

### 13.3 Youth, Education and skills development

According to the NDP, “improved education, for example, will lead to higher employment and earnings”<sup>6</sup>. The NDP presents a long-term strategy to increase employment and broaden opportunities through education, as well as vocational training, among others. On SMMEs and cooperatives in relation to education and training, young people made the following remarks;

- a) The education system produces job seekers instead of job creators.
- b) There is a need to build cooperative universities and college cooperatives.
- c) The education system should speak to today’s needs; it must prepare young people with necessary skills that will help them start businesses that can grow.
- d) The lack of alignment between learners and what potential employers seek in the job market suggests that the education system is producing outdated skills.
- e) The education system should therefore be reviewed.
- f) Free education for all must be realised.
- g) Teenage health, including mental health, should be prioritised at schools.
- h) Racism at schools must be addressed
- i) Eradication of mud schools and pit latrine toilets should be prioritised.
- j) Education and digital infrastructure are key investments to be made to enable learners with e-learning systems. This should be extended to all schools, both urban and rural to ensure that the rural child is not left behind.
- k) Learners with disabilities must be mainstreamed into the current schooling system to ensure equal access to education.
- l) On youth and small businesses; participants questioned who was equipping the youth with the necessary information and knowledge that they need in order to maintain and grow their small businesses and not just start them?
- m) Banks are charging exorbitant interest rates to young black people if they get the loan at all. Small businesses are forced to close down because they are not equipped by government to run successful businesses – not only financial but also knowledge injection to make sure that these businesses keep on running and grow.

---

<sup>6</sup> National Planning Commission (2012)

### 13.4 Youth and Government

The Executive arm of the state oversees the work of government. The executive develops policy, and then implements that policy by running the administration of the country through the different government departments<sup>7</sup>.

In this regard, young people expressed the following;

- a) Government must engage youth on matters affecting them.
- b) The President's return of the Copy Rights Amendment Bill and the Performers Amendment Bill to Parliament was welcomed. Notwithstanding the positive aspects of the Bills, there is still a need to ensure that persons in the creative industries retain their intellectual property.
- c) The Department for of Small Business must implement the Cooperative Amendment Act No.6 of 2013, in relation to the Cooperative Advisory Council, Cooperative Development Agency, and Cooperative Tribunal Council.
- d) Government should centralise the database for better coordination of non-tangible resources, engage civil society on skills development, and close the skills gap for SMMEs and coops so as to help them thrive.
- e) Build capacity and develop a package for one-stop shops for all socio-economy matters that relate to SMMEs and cooperatives development.
- f) The government response to Covid can help young people support their communities open up new opportunities to reopen and to rebuild the economy.
- g) The importance of the informal sector for income generation for the unemployed young people is key for economic growth and job creation. The Fourth Industrial revolution (4IR), data and technology provides new opportunities for the youth and will enable the youth to contribute to a sustainable future.
- h) Data prices should be reduced. The youth are eager to learn, do research and do online applications but data costs are a barrier. Companies must offer low rates for data particularly in low-income areas and in schools. Innovative community based programmes need to be well coordinated and scaled up through partnerships with government and civil society.
- i) In the era of the Fourth Industrial revolution, SA is importing technology gadgets while we should try to produce technologies locally to enhance the capacity of the economy.
- j) Persons with disabilities target should reach 7 per cent by 2030 and the shortages of special needs schools should be addressed.
- k) Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender people and intersex people's (LGBTQi's) rights are being overlooked and do not get any assistance from government.
- l) Youth business ventures in the agriculture sector must be encouraged.

---

<sup>7</sup> Parliament of the Republic of South Africa (2020)

- m) The Constitution is not as diverse as we are made to believe. Young people are facing the repercussions of leaders that loot monies meant for skills development and start-up capital.
- n) Reserve the micro-economy for South Africans only. In May 2020 BBC announced that R1 billion funding was being made available for township and rural economy. Participants questioned how many businesses have been funded thus far.
- o) Support for youth involved in the agriculture sector.
- p) Young people should take interest in sustainable ways of farming to avoid food shortages and hunger.
- q) Youth should be at the forefront of development and innovation.
- r) The youth's position on businesses in the informal sector should be clearly articulated.

### 13.5 Youth and Gender based violence

The Youth Parliamentarians observed that gender based violence and femicide is a youth challenge. Gender-based violence (GBV) does not discriminate. Any person of any race, age, sexual orientation, religion or gender can be a victim or perpetrator of GBV. Men can challenge the normalisation of violence to prevent violence against women and their children, youth have to challenge the beliefs and behaviours that excuse, justify or condone violence and inequality.

Delegates resolved:

#### Youth and the rest of society needs to challenge

- the normalisation of violence against women and children
- gender stereotypes and roles
- condoning of violence against women and children

Gender based violence has increased among society during COVID-19 period. The following were proposals to curb gender based violence.

- (a) State policies to address the impact of Covid-19 must keep the issue of gender-based violence as a priority as lockdown measures increase vulnerability.
- (b) State must implement risk management measures involving the police, justice and health sectors to ensure a coordinated response to the increased risk of gender-based violence.
- (c) Data collection on violence against women should be harmonised between State institutions to ensure the phenomenon can be adequately measured and addressed. This would help identify changing patterns of violence in times of crisis.
- (d) A proposal for harsher sentences on perpetrators of gender based violence and femicide. These perpetrators should not benefit from economic opportunities.

## 13.6 Youth and Parliament

The role of Parliament includes the following functions:

- Passing legislation or laws
- Scrutinise and oversee executive action
- Facilitate public participation and involvement in the legislative and other processes
- Participation in, promote and oversee co-operative government
- Engaging and participating in international participation (participate in regional, continental and international bodies)<sup>8</sup>

In this regard, young people raised the following;

- a) The youth participants are concerned that nothing happens after the annual Youth Parliament and stated that they would want Parliament to push for change and accountability. They raised the following concerns;
- b) What previous resolutions have been taken regarding jobs, youth owned SMMEs, cooperatives, and the high unemployment rates?
- c) What progress has been made after the previous Youth Parliaments? Young people noted that the youth attend Youth Parliaments but nothing takes place thereafter.
- d) Youth Parliament should not be a once off event it must take place either twice a year or every quarter.
- e) Oversight over the Executive must result in implementation by the Executive.
- f) Young Members must safeguard that procurement set-asides for youth are adhered to with no compromise.
- g) When Members conduct oversight they should take stock of delivery of services and follow-up on previous resolutions and recommendations.
- h) Parliament should prepare a progress report on progress made on issues raised by youth in previous Youth Parliaments and intensify its oversight over these issues.
- i) Parliament should take these issues raised during the Youth Parliament on procurement for youth owned enterprises, high unemployment rates and jobs for youth, to the relevant parliamentary committees and ensure change and accountability.
- j) There must be greater representation of youth and vulnerable groups in Parliament.

---

<sup>8</sup> Parliament of the Republic of South Africa (2020)