**Address by Hon. K.D Mahlatsi (ANC MP) during the Budget Vote 1 Debate: The Presidency**

2 June 2021

Hon. Speaker and Deputy Speaker Your Excellency President Cyril Ramaphosa;
Hon. Deputy President David Mabuza, Hon. Ministers Hon. Members of the House

**Introduction**

Honourable Speaker, the youth of 1976, on June 16 took the apartheid monster head-on.

These young revolutionaries were motivated by a desire for a better life and a democratic South Africa. This year marks 27 and 25 years of our democracy and the Constitution respectively. As we celebrate these milestones by our mass democratic movement, we are mindful of the socio economic challenges faced by young people today.

Since 1994, the quality of life for young people has improved significantly with increased access to better higher education.

This year is dedicated to Mme Charlotte Maxeke, the matriarch of our liberation struggle against race, class and gender oppression. We are today still confronted by patriarchy and gender-based violence (GBV), crime, poverty, unemployment, widening inequalities and societal moral decay and corruption.

In tackling all these challenges moving forward, we then should be reminded of the clarion call made by Charlotte Maxeke that “we need leadership by men and women who lead by example, men and women who love Africans more than they love themselves, men and women who preach unity and not discord, men and women whose actions are a lesson and do not simply say empty words”.

**Honourable Deputy Speaker,**

We all remember that in 2019 during his SONA, the President said that**‘this is the Presidency that is not afraid to act’**, and since then we have seen a lot of action and not mere ‘empty words’. On the 13th of February, Acting on his words this year during SONA, the President articulated the implementation of the Presidential Youth Employment Intervention, consisting of six priority actions over the next five years to reduce youth unemployment, and this initiative is driven by the Project Management Office (PMO) in the Presidency.

**Honourable Deputy Speaker,**

One of the priority interventions under the Economic Recovery and Reconstruction Plan is an employment stimulus to create jobs and support livelihoods. The Presidential Employment Stimulus (PES) supports a range of programmes, from expanding public employment to protecting existing jobs and creating new jobs through market-based mechanisms and aims to support livelihoods while the labour market recovers.

The establishment of the Policy Unity in the Presidency complements PMO in that it ensures evidence based policy alignment, effectively coordinated at provincial and national level.

**Honourable Speaker,** we should not commit a mistake of not giving recognition where it is due. As we remember Solomon Kalushi Mahlangu, one of the martyrs of the youth struggle and youth emancipation against poverty.

We are encouraged that the Presidency, through the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) and the Department of Small Business and Development (DSBD) has reached a target of about one thousand (1 000) young entrepreneurs receiving business support, and 15 000 start-ups will receive support in the MTEF period.

A transformative and inclusive economy must proactively include young people and their SMMEs as participants to help grow the economy. To help reduce high rate of start-up failures, we would like to see increased business support and services made available through the BizPortal.

**Honourable Deputy Speaker**

The global challenge around intellectual property right on vaccines is indicative that a nation’s greatest resource is her people; and this human capital needs to be harnessed in order to unleash its greatest innovative and creative potential. There is a greater need for social compacting around the skills revolution programme to help supplement temporary job initiatives taken by government, and no one should sits idly with capital and be a by-stander.

**Honourable Deputy Speaker,**

The NYDA leads by example, it is led by educated young professionals!! Unlike the blue and white epitome of white supremacy and white privilege led by those with fake qualifications.

In three (3) consecutive years the NYDA has produced clean audits and this is a clear display of capability by young people. The NYDA has become a catalyst of good governance, therefore, it is important that as we build State Capacity in appointing CEO’s, DG’s and senior managers of government departments and entities, young people must be considered.

Thus far the NYDA has assisted over 485 176 young people with life skills, 6210 youth owned enterprises receiving NYDA grants creating 29 239 jobs that have been sustained. An increase of a budget allocation to the NYDA will results in the creation of more jobs and enterprises.

The ANC as a caring and listening organisation, restarted the process of appointing the NYDA Board after young people had raised their concerns about the appointment process. We remain hopeful that the process of appointing the NYDA Board will soon reach finality and the good work of this Agency will continue to prevail.

Honourable Deputy Speaker

As we remember President Peter Mokaba and Secretary General Sindiso Magaqa, the real proponents of economic freedom in our lifetime, we are motivated by Nkosana Mtambo, a young farmer in Vrede in the Free State, whose employees are 75% youth, he contributes meaningfully to our agricultural productivity and food security.

Mr. Honourable President, Nkosana said ‘as young people, we are not leading TOMORROW, we are leading NOW’, and this is one of but many examples to indicate that young people are ready to become farmers and the expropriation of land without compensation will radically accelerate this process by pursuing with greater determination, the programme of land reform and rural development as part of radical economic transformation.

**Deputy Speaker**

COVID-19 has exposed how land dispossessions, skewed apartheid spatial developmental planning and forced removals have over decades reproduced the inequalities found in our modern-day societies.

Mr. Honourable President, there is a landless young person who sleeps on the streets of Cape Town without a home, his name is Johnie, he along with many other land hungry young people in the country, have asked that I remind the President that **“LAND WAS STOLEN and LAND MUST BE RETURNED!!!**

Johnie said that he saw in the newspaper that the Deputy President, His Excellency aka DD Mabuza handed over land ownership title deed to Covie community in the Western Cape, after a successful restitution claim.

**Deputy Speaker,**

If President Sphiwe Zuma and President Sandra Baloyi proponents of quality free education, were with us today, they would be delight that education is free for the poor, and government is working tirelessly to in finding lasting solutions for the missing middle.

We are encouraging more young people to take up maths and science as subjects, as the establishment of the University of Science and Innovation in Ekurhuleni will nurture and harness our nation’s scientific, technological and innovative capacity.

We agree that more still needs to be done to expand higher education and to develop a critical human capability for socio-economic transformation. Honourable Speaker, NSFAS works, many of us here are beneficiaries of NSFAS however, there is a need to tighten it administrative capacity.

Conclusion

Mr. President, these trying and turbulent times must remind you of Former General Secretary of the SACP Comrade Chris Hani, who in 1967 at the age of 25, led a platoon of young men and women as they were crossing the Zambezi River full of crocodiles. As a Commander , he held on to his machine gun and granites, he remained optimistic as he understood the revolutionary mission.

In a similar vein, Mr. President, You are the only Commander in Chief of the Country, hold onto the economic reconstruction and recovery plan that you have presented before this House. Do not be deterred by naysayers. Young people of this country have confidence and outmost trust in you.

Honorable Speaker, on behalf of the African National Congress, I firmly support Budget Vote 1 for The Presidency.

I thank you...