

# **Bold actions are needed to address youth unemployment**

By Luyolo Mphithi MP – Shadow Minister on Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities

Mr. President,

This debate is about the powerful vs the powerless. It's about the people vs the looters.

Please take a deep look; a deep look at South Africa and its youth.

Life is harsh and unforgiving especially if you are young and unemployed. Being young and unemployed in South Africa is pure hell.

We speak these words to break the many silences that we have become accustomed too. The silences that echo in this august house. How long must we wait and sit in silence because surely the weight of the injustice will choke us. Youth unemployment is killing young people Mr. President.

I'm sure in this house we all know someone who is or has been unemployed. We all know someone.

We should be uncomfortable to sit in this house while the youth remain without dignity, without jobs and skills and while degrees and certificates collect dust.

Mongameli Sidikiwe.

How long Mr. President must wait?

How long must we wait for the outcomes and impact of the Presidential Jobs Summit that took place last year? We expected this summit to address the issues regarding the failing Employment Tax incentive as it has failed to get the desired impact.

If we are indeed serious about skills development amongst young people, then we should address the state of our Tvet colleges across the country that are at the brink of falling apart. They need the support of this government.

The NYDA has lost confidence in the eyes of young people. You said Mr. President in your Youth Day address that the NYDA has trained over 400 000 young people, but Mr. President do you know out of that 400 000 only 25 000 were able to be placed in long term employment? That's 6%

Mr. President the NYDA is supposed to empower young people with start-up ideas however if you don't hold a green, black and yellow membership you won't benefit. We won't forget how the NYDA has become an aftercare of what used to be known as the ANCYL.

The National Rural Youth Service has completely failed. In its 8 years it has only "trained" 22341 young people. Firstly, this is not enough. Secondly, we also can't be sure of this number as we all remember in 2015 in Matatiele, Bizana and Queenstown where young people who were part of this programme were given certificates for courses they did not complete.

President you have stated that the YES programme has reached 18 000 young people. What are we measuring here, the output or the impact? Those young people are still far away from sustainable long-term employment. Because when you truly care you don't stop when they have left the

programme but you continue to follow up to find out whether they are able to find sustainable job opportunities.

Mr. President come with me to the Municipality of Midvaal led by the youngest Mayor in the country, Mayor Bongani Baloyi. They have launched the “Just Start Programme” that provides young people access to available land to start their own agricultural and farming projects. They facilitate and connect young people to initial capitalisation as well as further linking them to already existing industries which primarily require their produce and livestock such as poultry and maize.

This programme has also assisted youth owned companies and cooperatives, which have boosted the municipality in efficiently delivering some of its essential services such as waste collection, plumbing and road maintenance, among others. The story of Wes comes to mind a young person who went through this programme who now has employed 42 employees.

Mr. President come with me to the City of Johannesburg led by Ntate Herman Mashaba where artisans are currently being trained in collaboration with the University of Johannesburg with a target of 300 for the 2018/19 financial year. The Department of Economic Development is in the process of designing the second phase of the programme, which will target more training opportunities over the remaining council term of office.

The DA-led coalition has established Opportunity Centres to focus on a basket of services that will achieve the real empowerment of small businesses through partnerships with SARS, CIPC, SAICA, SEDA, the Innovation Hub and a number of private sector partners. The City has opened these centres in Diepsloot, Inner City, and Roodeport.

I have a duty to speak the truth as I see it. So, we say to the ANC we need bold action because when you remember us, we would have already forgotten you.