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**Presentation regarding the Charter and the role of youth in Energy and Minerals towards and in relation to the establishment of the National Youth Development Agency for the parliament debate on 17 – 18 November, 2008**

Youth in Energy and Mining was formed by the current Minister of Minerals and Energy, Minister Buyelwa Sonjica, aimed at mainstreaming youth participation in these industries and also giving part and taking part to young people in the country a share of the above mentioned industries.

It is our belief that all independent countries in our continent received independence but were kept away from the economic benefits. It's our firm view that our continent will never realize its true freedom unless we take control of the production that comes from these industries.

Young people are the economically productive members of our societies, therefore, need to play a meaningful and direct role in growing our local economies. We live in interesting times whereby these industries are undergoing transformation but few of our young people know about that, talk less of taking part and having part in these industries economic space.

South Africa omitted during CODESA by not tying into the political settlement the issues of liberating our economy, to ensure that there is equitable and equal distribution of wealth of our country. The freedom charter says, "There shall be nationalization of industries and the wealth of the country shall be shared amongst its citizens." But the opposite is true; instead the country is capitalizing on the strength of the many to benefit the few.

Therefore, South Africa needs a true economic liberation which will bridge the gap of inequalities and imparities. We need a transformation that is not going to indebt us but it should empower us with the means which are the factors of production.

During apartheid all our assets that we were using to generate wealth, were taken away from us and post 1994, we were not given back what is equivalent to what we lost and relevant to current market forces. We therefore require a true empowerment not through credit but provision of skills, tools, and all the necessary ingredients for what it takes to grow and build our local economies.

Currently, our economic infrastructures are designed like a tunnel or funnel whereby they are taking every raw material to first world countries. This phenomenon leads to us cross

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subsidizing unemployment of the first world countries at the expense of the third world countries.

We need a structure that is informed by the national common agenda which is currently missing and it must ensure that every South African from childhood to adulthood must have an economic franchise whereby they are given access to the factors and the means of production.

The current structures were and are not pioneering this purpose but they assume that all South Africans are on par and they are expected to compete for the same opportunities. The aftermath of that is the manifestation of systematic, structural, policy, legislative and process wise marginalization of those who were previously disadvantaged.

We need to start by ensuring that there is parity amongst the citizens, afterwards we need to directly empower them to put them on the economic pedestal in order for them to have a springboard to start to eventually realize equally, to compete and partake in the countries booming economic activities.

Our laws must also be lenient when we deal with this process of liberating our economies, because having the right is not enough but we must also protect that right by giving proper access that right.

We need a process that will hand hold guide, mentor, capacitate, empower, provide and train to educate our young people regarding the functioning of our economies and must ensure that we have maximum implementation of policies and laws that are going to be developed by these structures that we are building.

It has become clear that our banking systems and other major companies are not keen in leading this process of liberating our economy. We therefore, need to have a strong stake that will have its own funding mechanism in order to finance the agenda of bringing and mainstreaming the poor into the economic space.

We need to reconfigure our economic infrastructures and structures in such a way that nothing leave our country shores with adding value to it, so that we will create industries that are going to absorb our people by getting them into formal businesses and empowerment.

We must inculcate a mindset that says to our young people that, they are entitled to their country's minerals and they deserve to be given priority in accessing them and beneficiating them to the benefit of our country. Our people can no longer become only the supplier to the dinner tables of the rich and be pull and push in the mines and factories. But from now on we must infuse a mindset that says, they too are allowed to become the captains of industries.

We need to rid our continent the stigma of colonialism whereby some among our countries were designed to be colonies of exploitation, settlement colonies and colonies



contested colonies. This we will do by developing and growing a generation that will make it their profession to ensure that our visions and missions are geared towards a true economic liberation of our country and the continent.

This structure must not just be an advisory one but must lead the way in terms of implementing all our ideal policies.

**To be presented by:**

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