

Director-General Remarks during the Anniversary of the 16th of June 1976, hosted by Office of the Premier, Limpopo Provincial Administration

I wish to express a warm gratitude to you for attending this important session to reflect on matters related to youth development in the Office of the Premier in particular, and the Limpopo Province in general. This is part of an ongoing anniversary of the heroic contribution made by the 1976 Detachment.

The Office of the Premier is tasked with the overall coordination youth development in the Province. Youth development remains a strategic focus area in the provincial administration. This focused priority should be pursued with the active involvement of primary stakeholders, the Youth. Hence, your participation as Young Public Servants.

Young people constitute a significant demographic composition of approximately 37% of the country's population. In addition, Africa is one of the youthful Continents across the World. We are therefore propelled to focus on youth development as a key pillar of a sustainable development trajectory.

A Development perspective on Youth Development

The National Development Plan (., 98) indicates that:-

“Having a relatively young population can be advantageous, provided the majority of working-age individuals are gainfully employed...The challenge is to convert this into a demographic dividend. This will only be possible if the number of working-age individuals can be employed in productive activities”.

While acknowledging the centrality of social partners in advancing youth development, we should always understand that the young people themselves are motive forces of social change, as France Fanon (2004, 31) would argue that *“Each generation must, out of relative obscurity, discover its mission, fulfil it, or betray it”*.

A history of the liberation struggle is, indeed, manifested with protracted personalities of young people who have fulfilled this heroic prophesy - young people such as Nelson Mandela, Oliver Tambo, Winnie Mandela, Solomon Mahlangu, Steve Biko, Tsietsi Mashinini, Peter Mokaba, Professor Chilizi Marawa, Simphiwe Dana, amongst others. These young people made a significant impact to humanity at their prime age. The primary actors who had facilitated popular mobilisation for a democratic change in the late 1970s and the 1980s were the youth. Of course, this proposition does not negate the critical role played by workers during this period.

Building a Youth-centred Developmental Administration

These gallant Heroes and Heroines shaped the pace and rhythm of human progress under the conditions which were not necessarily favourable to young people. Equally so, the Youth of today are confronted with key challenges which require innovation, creativity and agility as the necessary attributes to advance economic transformation. These challenges include unemployment, and place enormous constraints on providing quality education and inadequate interventions on the imperatives of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. In addition to these systemic challenges, the impact of COVID-19 is posing a threat to sustainable livelihoods and economic development.

The working youth are, therefore, best-placed to provide a necessary leadership for the entire youth detachment. As Young Public Servants, you are further expected to utilise your youthfulness and strategic location in the public service and administration to serve as organic intellectuals to advance the overall objectives of the Limpopo Development Plan. Part of the immediate tasks is to ensure that you play a critical role in terms of implementing COVID-19 Risk Adjustment Plan both in the workplace and in the community. This includes compliance to various directives and safety measures on COVID-19.

Another urgent task is to develop a conscious and resolute detachment of young Public Servants for Gender Equity and Transformation. A democratic Government cannot achieve its development agenda unless we achieve the overall imperatives of building a non-racial, **non-sexist** and prosperous society. A systemic attention on gender-based violence whereby women and children are the primary victims is therefore an immediate task that cannot be postponed. It is, indeed, an integral part of eradication of all forms of oppression of human beings by human beings. Public servants, especially the youthful ones, have a legal obligation to eradicate patriarchy and other regressive practices in advancing social emancipation.

Conclusion

The core of your contribution is to ensure that the provincial government plays a significant role in facilitating economic growth and development. Various research findings noted that industrialisation is a key pillar for sustainable youth empowerment.

In conclusion, the Youth are the future!

I thank you!