

**SPEECH OF THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING, MR MDUDUZI
MANANA, MP DURING THE BUDGET VOTE ON 13 MAY 2015**

Honourable Chairperson

Minister of Higher Education and Training Dr Nzimande

Ministers and Deputy Ministers

Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee, members of the committee and all members of parliament

DG and staff of the department

Heads and Executives of all our Post-School Entities and Institutions

Honoured and special guests

Comrades and friends

It gives me great pleasure to address this house today on the occasion of the budget vote of the Department of Higher Education and Training. Today, we have converged in the City of Cape Town, not to revel in just another annual pastime, but are here with increased confidence believing that our new experiences, the exciting achievements scored and the instructive failures and setbacks encountered, have equipped us to navigate the terrain ahead of us much wiser and with tactful thinking.

Honourable Chairperson,

Last year, we launched and declared 2014-2024 as the Decade of the Artisan, with the sole aim of creating a pipeline of qualified artisans who can play a crucial role in growing the emerging sectors of our economy and in turn create massive employment for our youth. To this end, we remain steadfast in our work of elevating the status and profile of artisans in the country, our conviction to see our TVET colleges become institutions of first choice remain unfazed and our robust and frank engagements with employers to open up their workplaces for our artisan learners to gain workplace exposure remain uninterrupted.

Honourable Chairperson,

To further build impetus on the work we are doing on the artisan front, this year WE will participate in the World Skills International Competitions for the first time as a fully-fledged affiliate to World Skills International.

In the public gallery today, we have 21 young South Africans who will be going with me to Brazil in

August this year, to compete against young people from over 72 countries, competing in 19 artisanal skills areas. These young people were selected at our inaugural World Skills South Africa National Competition that took place here in Cape Town in January this year. These competitions are another way of harnessing our energies towards the decade of the artisan and they will surely contribute meaningfully in the overall economic growth of our country.

Honourable Chairperson,

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES...

When we spoke in this august house a year ago, we pledged to direct all our efforts towards creating skills opportunities for our youth especially those who still live in the most rural and remote areas of our country. We are back in the house to give a report back on what we have done and what we intend doing going into the future. Honourable Chairperson, our Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) are making sound interventions in communities with dire distress by skilling young people so that they can, in turn, be eligible for employment. In the last financial year, a total number of 175 562 young people entered into learning programmes and these are young people who would have otherwise been disgruntled but they have since regained their confidence and many of them are now in employment. A further 244 069 young people will be trained over the next year through the SETAs.

Honourable Chairperson, we are also intensifying our internship programme and perhaps it is worth mentioning that in the 2014/ 2015 financial year, the Department took over 130 interns from universities and colleges and we intend taking over another 160 over the 2015/ 2016 financial year. We urge other government departments and portfolio agencies and entities as well as the private sector to intensify their efforts and especially consider taking up interns from our TVET colleges.

Honourable Chairperson,

HIV/ AIDS

The Higher Education AIDS programme is continuing to implement comprehensive programmes that respond to the impact of the dual epidemics (HIV, STIs and TB) in the higher education and training sector. Today, we report with a sigh of relief, confident that the measures we have since put in place will result in better returns on investment and better student throughput rates. We will continue in the coming year with activation programmes of promoting HIV testing and screening of TB targeting our rural and township university and college campuses. In the last financial year, we managed to test over 101 000 students and staff for HIV and screened another 92 000 for TB and 81 000 for STIs. In this financial year, our target is to test and screen 170 000 students and staff but we will also be making sure that those who test positive are put on treatment, care and support. There is no doubt, Honourable Members, that it will only take a healthy nation to breed a healthy economy.

Honourable Chairperson,

APPLY NOW

We have now started with the 2015 leg of the Apply Now campaign where we are visiting rural and township schools across the country, disseminating information on the need for matriculants to apply in time to institutions of higher learning as well as offering career advice to especially Grade 9-12 learners. We have partnered with the Department of Basic Education in the training of life orientation teachers and in the distribution of the APPLY NOW booklets to all Grade 12 learners across the 6000 high schools in the country.

One of my special guest today is Nosipho Ndlovu who wrote to me in March this year and said 'Deputy Minister, it was only after your visit to our school at Diepsloot in May 2013 that I got encouraged to apply on time to three universities as per your advice. I got accepted by the University of Cape Town and I'm now pursuing my second year in Civil Engineering funded by NSFAS. I really wasted no time and thanks to DHET for making my dreams come true'. Siyakubongisa nathi Nosipho, ingathi ungaqhubeka kahle nezifundo zakho zobunjinyela, uze ube nelikusasa elihle.

Honourable Chairperson,

On career development, we are working tirelessly to establish a credible institutional mechanism for skills planning, the provision of skilled people and a national career development system. Last year, Cabinet approved that the Department of Higher Education and Training lead the development of a Career Development Policy and I am happy to report that this policy will be finalized this year and will provide the impetus to a single coordinated service.

Honourable Chairperson,

DISABILITY

Last year, we launched the Social Inclusion Policy Framework which will, amongst other social inclusion issues, advocate for the establishment of disability units in all post-school education and training institutions and also address the important issues of reasonable accommodation and access for students with disabilities.

Honourable Chairperson,

Notwithstanding these advances, the department continues to fund students with disabilities for their tuition, assistive devices and other personal needs like accommodation and transport. Many challenges still exist in the college system especially because of lack of understanding for the area, however we are doing our best to assist them and we have no doubt that the new policy will address some of these challenges. We will also intensify the campaign led by the Office of the Deputy Minister of visiting special schools in the country to promote post-school opportunities for persons with disabilities as well as funding opportunities.

Honourable Chairperson,

Allow me to evoke the thoughts of 4 students who I had breakfast with this morning in order for them to inform some aspects of my text. These are Motheo Lengoasa from the University of Cape Town, Ntombi Gijana from the University of the Western Cape, Buyile Matiwana from the Cape Peninsula University of Technology and Sibusiso Xabangela from the North link TVET College. These students, all beneficiaries of NSFAS, have sought to implore on the ministry and the department to prioritize the area of student accommodation, to put mechanisms to monitor closely the disbursements of student loans and bursaries by NSFAS, to drive the transformation agenda much more vigorously and to implement fee-free education for the poor without delay. Though, I had clarified the students this morning, but it is important that I further clarify the nation that we are doing all we can to address the backlog in student accommodation. We know that this is a fundamental need and that is why in June this year, we will be convening a student accommodation symposium where we will bring all role players under one roof to find workable approaches which will take us forward.

Honourable Chairperson,

COOPERATIVES ACADEMY

As government, we are still convinced that if we pursue the sectors that the Growth Path has identified as growth points, the potential of creating an inclusive economy that is on a growth trajectory, is huge. There is no doubt, therefore, that young professionals and cooperatives in particular, must come into this space, so that together, we create this inclusive economy that we are all so yearning for. We have, however, seen many cooperatives getting established in our country but very few succeeding and we attribute this failure to lack of training in areas such as cooperatives management, financing, conflict resolution, amongst others.

My office has been tasked to lead the process of establishing the country's first cooperatives academy and we will report to this house on the progress we are making in this area.

Honourable Chairperson,

E-LEARNING

Also, during this year, we will start with the piloting of e-learning at selected teaching and learning delivery sites as part of our response to a wave of dynamic education sector reforms; specifically related to the adoption of educational technologies to enhance teaching-and-learning practices, education management, research and administration.

Honourable Chairperson, Honourable Members

Let me take this opportunity and thank the President of the Republic of South Africa, H.E JG Zuma, for the trust he has shown in me and the continuous support he gives us.

To Dr Nzimande, thank you for the guidance and team work that we continue to demonstrate.

Indeed, our leadership success will be measured in how this department creates an environment for

children from poor households on the farms, and those in rural areas and townships, imagine and realize endless possibilities for a better life, free from poverty and social deprivation.

To the Director-General of the Department, senior officials and the entire DHET team, thank you for the valour you continue to display.

To the Chief of Staff in the Ministry, the Acting Head of Office and the entire ministry staff, thank you for putting up with us and for forever willing to go beyond the call of duty.

To my family and friends, thank you once more for the unflinching support that you continue to give.

Honourable Chairperson,

We are a nation with great goals. We may not reach them all this year. Maybe not even in this decade. But we will eventually reach them. The lesson of our history - and the lesson of the last 21 years - is that great goals are reached step by step, always building on our progress. Always gaining ground as we build on the hope of our people. Of course, you can't gain ground if you're standing still. Our commitment and seriousness can only be judged by the extent to which we use our past lessons to devise better strategies and solutions to the many challenges that confront us as we forge ahead to a prosperous future.