

**ADDRESS BY THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF HIGHER  
EDUCATION AND TRAINING, MR BUTI MANAMELA,  
TO THE SOUTH AFRICAN SUGAR ASSOCIATION -  
SHUKELA TRAINING CENTRE GRADUATION  
CEREMONY  
MOUNT EDGECOMBE, KWA ZULU NATAL  
6 JULY 2018**

Programme Director – Mr Cedric Mboyisa

Vice-Chairman of the South African Sugar Association – Mr  
Hans Hackman

External Affairs Director of SASA – Ms Portia Mpofo

General Manager of the Shukela Training Centre – Mr Thami  
Mathe

It gives me great pleasure to participate in this graduation ceremony today. This is a special day for all of you graduating. It is the culmination of hard work, long hours of studying and applying yourself to your selected trade. Graduations must be celebrated. And I am fortunate to join you today in your celebrations.

We celebrate your graduation in the centenary years of Nelson Mandela and Albertina Sisulu. These great patriots were also higher education and training graduates. Albertina Sisulu trained and qualified as a nurse. Nelson Mandela trained and qualified as a lawyer. Both recognised the significance of higher education and training for their personal growth, career prospects and livelihoods. Although the apartheid system limited their career aspirations and their educational pathway, both patriots understood the importance of higher education and training, not only for their own life prospects but also for contributing to the struggle against apartheid and for social justice.

I commend the South African Sugar Association and its Shukela Training Centre for its outstanding work in skilling young people and preparing them for the labour market. Being accredited by our Quality Council on Trades and Occupations as well as various Sector Education and Training Authorities, the Shukela Training

Centre is both a skills development provider and a trade test centre.

With over 1500 learners being trained and 900 trade tests conducted annually, the Shukela Training Centre, is partnering with government to meet the target of our country's National Development Plan of producing 30,000 artisans per year by 2030.

Three years ago, we launched and declared 2014-2024 as the Decade of the Artisan with the sole aim of creating a pipeline of qualified artisans to address the scarce skills shortage and to grow the economy. Through this campaign we want to elevate the status and profile of artisans. I am visiting employers and industry associations at their workplaces to pursue closer collaborations so that employers can open up their workplaces. We must make every workplace a training space.

We must forge closer collaboration between our higher education and training institutions and industry. It is for this reason that the Department of Higher Education and Training is implementing the Colleges of Specialisation Project. The project is an innovative intervention to address the demand for priority trades needed for government to implement the National Development Plan 2030 in general and its National Infrastructure Plan in particular.

The project also contributes towards building the capacity of the public TVET College system to deliver trade qualifications with employer partners. Following a period of intensive research, we have established thirteen trades that are particularly in short supply. We have contracted with four industry associations – the Steel and Engineering Industries of Southern Africa, the Retail Motor Industries, the Southern African Institute of Welding and the Institute of Plumbers of South Africa to help us to upgrade two colleges per trade with a total of 26 colleges.

By the end of June 2018 the curricula for each trade will be updated to industry standards, a process which industry partners have led. For the remainder of this year we will appoint and work with lecturers/facilitators to develop learning materials for the 13 trades and to finalise the contracting of apprentices by employers to be ready for the first intake of learners at the beginning of 2019.

The National Skills Fund has committed R150 million to fund these needed interventions and our donor partners and the SETAs have been asked to supplement this where required. SETAs have committed 780 apprenticeship grants for employers.

We have been, and are mobilising employers to secure partnerships with companies for the workplace learning component of these programmes. We see this programme rolling out to more apprentices, more colleges and for more trades and occupations as we proceed.

In this way we will modernise the TVET system and thereby make our contribution to employment creation in South Africa.

I appeal to the South African Sugar Association to encourage your members to participate in the Colleges of Specialisation project. High quality industry relevant training programmes together with a closer collaboration between industry and our TVET colleges, all lead to better equipped graduates. It is in our best interest for us to work more closely together in moving our country forward.

Earlier this year, the Department of Higher Education and Training presented its 2018-19 Budget in Parliament under the theme of “Human Resources Development and the Fourth Industrial Revolution”. It is an important area that we must consider and plan for if we are to be relevant in the future.

As a country we need to embrace the opportunities the Fourth Industrial Revolution brings and develop the necessary competencies by inclusion into our education and training sector. To remain relevant, education and training institutions therefore needs to ensure the development of knowledgeable and competent students, based on best practice, staying ahead of technology developments, and the delivery of subject matter through utilising technology.

We need to focus on new ways of teaching and learning to ensure our graduates are relevant. Technology needs to be brought into our teaching environments to enable and aid staff in the creation of a better environment where learning can be aided. Learning should take place in an environment that is developmental and innovative in its approach. We need to be flexible, encourage new ideas, focus research areas and innovate to remain abreast in this constantly changing environment.

As government prepares for the Fourth Industrial Revolution, so too must private training providers like the Shukela Training Centre in order to remain relevant and prepare for the future.

Allow me to direct the conclusion of my speech to our graduates today. Your graduation did not come easy. You are making education fashionable. And as Nelson Mandela said, “education is the ultimate equaliser”.

I wish you much success for the future. Indeed it is good to be a graduate.

I thank you.