

Minister Pandor's speech to the Hope Africa AGM

**Christ The King Church,
Sophiatown, Johannesburg
5 June 2018**

Thank you for inviting me to your AGM. It's a pleasure to join you today.

The government greatly values its relationship with its social partners and civil society - especially the churches, which do excellent all-round work in our communities.

Indeed, we appreciate Hope Africa's promotion and implementation of a social development programme for the improvement of the spiritual, physical and emotional well-being of marginalised communities.

I have learnt of the work of Hope Africa with great interest. We need even more initiatives if we are to give young people hope. The statistics we read about everyday tend to be very discouraging to young people.

We are told that young people are the majority of all South Africans who are unemployed. Millions of young people have never been to school or had access to training. In the period since 1994 government has directed efforts at opening up new opportunities for young people and while there are significant challenges much has been done. The following achievements in education are noteworthy.

In basic education, we have achieved near universal access for all children. The policy promise of Mr Mandela in 1994, that all children will have access to ten years of compulsory education has been met for the majority of South Africa's children. Even more positive is the fact that over 80% of these children attend school without having to pay fees.

A further positive is that girls attend school in equal number to boys, thus we have achieved gender parity in schooling. The introduction and achievement of near universal access to Grade R is going to be an important contributor to our resolving the inadequate learning achievements in many of our schools and will help reduce drop outs and repetition.

One of our abiding challenges is the continuing poor level of success in Mathematics and the Sciences. This is an area in which we need a determined, concerted national effort, to reverse poor self-confidence and inadequate pass marks. Project Hope and other initiatives have a major contribution to make in this area.

Higher education is another area in which there has been significant progress. Young black students are now a majority in our universities. In 2016 enrolment in higher education reached 1.1 million. Public institutions enrolled 975 837 students, while private higher education enrolled 167 408 students. This places us close to the NDP target of 1.6 million students in the system by 2030.

Enrolment in TVET colleges has also grown significantly, 705 397 students in 2016. We have not yet reached the NDP target of 1 million in 2015, but we are recording steady progress. One of the most striking facts of the 2016 CHE findings is that in 2016 the majority of graduates from public higher education institutions were in the Science Engineering and Technology fields (29.1%), followed by Business and Management

(27.8%), all other Humanities (22.4%) and Education (20.7%).

These statistics point to important progress by South Africa and we need to build on these positive foundations by drawing on your contributions and partnerships with other stakeholders.

Government is working hard to build on these achievements. We have a number of initiatives directed at youth empowerment. The recently launched YES initiative is a good example. It will provide at least one million young people with employment in the private sector. It is a partnership between government, labour and civil society. Another important intervention is education and training offered through the National Skills Fund (NSF). The fund supports a range of organisations to provide skills training. The NSF's focus is on training a capable workforce for inclusive growth.

Increasingly, the NSF is being called upon to function as a catalytic fund to meet the training needs of the unemployed, non-levy-paying co-operatives, NGOs and community structures, as well as vulnerable groups.

It is also required to promote strategic partnerships and innovations in project delivery, such as the relationship it has with Hope Africa – this wide range of partnerships is very necessary given the immense youth empowerment challenge in South Africa. I am particularly pleased that education units of our religious communities are also playing a role. The NSF has set itself the ambitious target of funding the training of at least 70,000 young people every year for the next five years. I hope that a large part of this training will take place in our TVET colleges and community colleges.

Allow me to outline some of our plans for the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges around the country. Recently we launched an initiative that prioritizes the teaching of 13 trades and occupations at TVET colleges.

This ambitious initiative, known as the Centres of Specialisation Programme, is also funded by the NSF and is designed to address the growing demand for trades

that are needed for the successful implementation of the country's National Development Plan in general, as well as the National Infrastructure Plan in particular.

In addition, the Programme is meant to contribute towards building the capacity of TVET colleges to deliver critically needed trade qualifications in partnership with employers.

The implementation of the Programme is part of our plan to build an expanded, effective and integrated post-school education system that is anchored by the TVET colleges, and which adequately prepares students for the workplace or self-employment.

The Programme is deliberately structured in such a way that students will develop and maintain close working relationships with employers in their areas of study, through equally close partnerships between colleges and employers.

The Programme will achieve its objectives by focusing on the development of the 13 trades in high demand for the

country's infrastructure projects, as well as for other strategic programmes such as the 'War on Leaks' and [Operation Phakisa](#) (in mining, agriculture, the oceans economy, the green economy).

The list of priority trades that have been identified include bricklaying, electricians, boilermakers, plumbers, automotive and diesel mechanics, carpenters and joiners, welders, fitters and turners, and riggers. By focusing on the 13 trades in high demand, not only will the strategic projects of the government be constructed and maintained using highly skilled local artisans, but also this will simultaneously contribute to job creation and poverty alleviation in the country.

What is most pleasing so far is that the government, TVET colleges and employers are working together very closely to advance the Programme in the interest of the country, the economy and all our people. We plan to expand both the number of colleges involved in the current two-year Programme, as well as the number of

trades covered - as I recently emphasised in my 2018 Budget Vote in the National Assembly.

I believe the Programme will contribute to the development of our country, the creation of much-needed jobs and start-up enterprises, as well as the alleviation of poverty and inequality.

I encourage the Church to continue with, and to expand your partnership with, the NSF as you implement your Work Integrated Learning programme.

If such key programmes are taken to more areas and regions, with more partners joining this cause, we will create more jobs and alleviate poverty.

Indeed, government cannot achieve all of the country's developmental goals alone. South Africa badly needs all-embracing strategic partnerships, such as the one between the NSF and Hope Africa, to improve the lives of our people and communities.

The government has done well on opening up and expanding education opportunity, we have been less successful in inculcating values of care, respect and shared community interest in our stakeholders. Every week I hear of a college arson or vandalism. This lack of appreciation of the meaning and value of community resources is a worrying phenomenon that I wish we could work on together.