



higher education & training

Department:
Higher Education and Training
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**SPEECH BY THE MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING, THE
HONOURABLE DR B.E. NZIMANDE: LAUNCH OF J.P. PHUNGULA SKILLS
DEVELOPMENT CENTRE, IXOPO, SISONKE DISTRICT, 7 APRIL 2014.**

Programme Director

Mayor of uBuhlebezwe Municipality, the Honourable Z.D. Nxumalo

Chief Executive Officer of the Construction SETA, Ms Sonja Pilusa

Principal of Esayidi TVET College

Councillors

Traditional leaders

Umdeni ka Bab'u Phungula

Community members

Distinguished guests

Students

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Ngiyanibingelela

I am very happy indeed to be part of this sod-turning ceremony marking the construction of the J.P. Phungula Skills Development Centre. This Centre is vital for the socio-economic development of Sisonke District.

The Centre is named after a renowned African National Congress cadre, uBab'u Johannes Phumani Phungula, better known in the exile community as "Half Past Four". Yindawo yamaqhawe ke le ngisho ngoba no Henry Chiliza, our Ambassador in Tanzania as well as Mr. N. Magubane, the ANC member of Parliament, come from this area.

The Skills Centre that will rise on this site, funded by the Construction Education and Training Authority (CETA) to the tune of R5 million, will bring exceptional educational facilities to uBuhlebezwe Local Municipality, which is deeply in need of them. The commitment to this fine facility, which will be under Esayidi TVET College, is in keeping with my Department's deliberate strategy to channel skills development resources to rural communities like this. Again, the launch of this Skills Centre today demonstrates that as government we are committed to skilling marginalized communities in order to transform our country's economy.

Over 3.4 million of the country's young people between the ages of 15 and 24 are not in employment, education or training. Projections show that if average annual economic growth were to rise to 5%, unemployment amongst 15-24 year olds would be around 44% and 31% by 2020 and 2030 respectively. We must therefore ensure that our programmes and policies focus on developing skills that are required by the economy so that our youth become part of the mainstream economy. One of the highest priorities of my Department, the Department of Higher Education and Training, is to ensure that our youth is given post-school education and training opportunities to improve their employability.

I am delighted to hear that classes under the banner of J.P. Phungula Skills Development Centre have recently resumed with a total of 189 students using community halls to further their educational goals. I am impressed by this obvious commitment. It reminds me that before the establishment of the modern facility at the Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College (SOMAFCO), the ANC school in Tanzania during exile times, the school administrators decided to use old sisal plantation houses for teaching and learning. Indeed, our cadre Phungulo, after whom this Skills Centre is named, spent a great deal of time at SOMAFCO. As we remember him, so did he remember his comrades who fell in exile for the free South Africa which we see growing around us: amongst other things we honour him for restoring and preserving the school's graveyard.

The building of the J.P. Phungula Skills and Development Centre reflects the commitment of my Department to channeling skills development resources to rural communities like this. For instance, with the assistance of CETA we are building other skills centres in areas across

the country like Springbok in the Northern Cape, Ingwavuma here in KwaZulu-Natal, Venda in Limpopo and Bredasdorp in the Western Cape. As a department we are also developing a strategy for skills development centres across the country the central purpose of which is “expanding the skills development provision through a skills centre model that is rooted in communities”.

The skills development centre model will complement the new post school education and training system while also responding to the socio-economic needs of the society. Community skills development centres like J.P. Phungula will offer a myriad of programmes, aimed at equipping community members with skills to enhance their employability or self-employment, enabling them to generate income. Skilling our people is one of the most effective ways of overcoming the legacy of apartheid - ubandlululo.

Ixopo, under which uBuhlebezwe Municipality belongs, has huge dairy, livestock and crop farming potential. It is already strong in forestry and tourism (game farming, cultural tourism and ecotourism, not forgetting avi-tourism for visitors who want to enjoy this area’s rich bird life), and can be even stronger. These natural resources are a major potential source of economic development, job creation, conservation, and economic growth. Skilling people along these lines is the obvious role of this new Skills Centre. Thus other SETAS such as AGRISETA, CATHSSETA, FOODBEV, W&RSETA, the Services SETA and merSETA have an enormous role to play in unlocking the many human and material resources of this area.

With skills centres like J.P. Phungula in place, there will be no need for our people to go to major cities in search of basic skills unless their aim is to build on what they have already acquired through other institutions. In fact, this new Skills Development Centre will have to work closely with universities and TVET colleges additional to and other than Esayidi. This is in tune with our White Paper on Post-School Education and Training, launched in Pretoria on the 16th of January this year, which is explicit about the future of post-school education in this country. It promotes vocational training and seeks to improve alignment between institutions within the post school sector in an effort to improve learner mobility. In other words the system must provide paths for articulation between different qualifications: there should be no dead ends for students; there should always be a way for someone from, for

example, J.P. Phungula Skills Development Centre, to improve their qualifications without undue repetition or hindrance.

Vocational education is the true foundation of our post-school education. TVET Colleges should be institutions of choice and we are beginning to see positive feedback from all corners of the country. An avalanche of youth is registering with TVET colleges in order to obtain good qualifications. TVET student enrolments increased by 131% from 345 566 in 2010. We are now targeting 800 000 in 2014. Our 2030 enrolment targets are 1.62 million in public universities, 2.5 million in TVET colleges, 1 million in community colleges and 0.5 million in private institutions.

Izinhlelo zethu singmnyango wemfundo ephakeme azipheleni lapha e Ixopo. In this province we are planning to build new TVET campuses and two new skills centres. These will create an additional new TVET college spaces. In Pietermaritzburg we have invested R300 million in the DUT Indumiso complex to expand infrastructure and programme offerings for engineering and mid-level health professionals. We also need to further upgrade the Plessislaer TVET college campus in Pietermaritzburg as part of the revitalization of that educational precinct. This is also going to create jobs in Pietermaritzburg whilst expanding post school education and training opportunities. We have similar plans in other areas of the province. For example: for the period 2012/13 to 2014/15, provincial universities have received the following funding for student residences:

- DUT - R115 million
- MUT - R85 million
- Zululand - R120 million
- UKZN - R80 million.

In Durban:

- To date, the department has allocated a total of R585.1 million towards infrastructure development at Durban University of Technology (DUT). For the period 2007/08 to 2009/10, R50 million was allocated, for the period 2010/11 to 2011/12, R173.6 million was allocated and for the period 2012/13 to 2014/15, a further R361.5 million is allocated to DUT.

- To date, the department has allocated a total of R335.2 million towards infrastructure development at Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT). For the period 2008/09 to 2009/10, R30 million was allocated, for the period 2010/11 to 2011/12, R76.2 million was allocated and for the period 2012/13 to 2014/15, a further R229 million is allocated to MUT.
- To date, the department has allocated a total of R586.7 million towards infrastructure development at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). For the period 2006/07 to 2009/10, R 124 million was allocated, for the period 2010/11 to 2011/12, R218.7 million was allocated and for the period 2012/13 to 2014/15, a further R244 million is allocated to UKZN. Of course UKZN has a branch in Pietermaritzburg.

Furthermore, the DHET is working with education and community role-players to develop an education precinct in Imbali Pietermaritzburg. This development will represent a new and innovative model for education delivery, linking a range of education and community enterprises that enable them to support each other, to develop and use shared resources and to put in place programmes that are locally and nationally relevant, that articulate with each other, and in so doing to provide quality education opportunities to the communities they serve. The close proximity of the Indumiso campus of the Durban University of Technology, the Plessislaer campus of uMgungundlovu TVET College, a full range of range of schools representing learning from early childhood right up to the TVET Phase, a special needs school and a hospital will enable the Imbali Education Precinct to break down the traditional boundaries that tend to exist between different levels and types of education institutions and so will provide an example of the integrated education system described in the recently published White Paper for Post-School Education and Training.

Once more, thanks to CETA for sponsoring this project and for working together with uBuhlebezwe local municipality and Esayidi TVET in implementing it. The centre created by this project will go a long way towards providing the youth of the whole Sisonke District and surrounding areas with access to education and training opportunities. Let me say directly to you, Ms. Sonja Pilusa, CEO of the Construction SETA: we are all aware that it is vital that our students must be exposed to Work Integrated Learning in a workplace environment so as to promote their practical skills for future employment. We hope that the Construction SETA

will facilitate workplace learning for the students of J.P. Phungula Skills Development Centre.

I want to say to you, the youth: this sod turning ceremony is one way of demonstrating that as government we will continue to implement good educational programmes, aggressively removing the barriers, which, in the past, limited your access to education and training. We want you to be economically active citizens who possess necessary skills and play an active and meaningful role in the economy. There is no doubt this Skills Centre will go a long way to improving your chances of employability. You must use it effectively. I would like to encourage you to take education seriously. Siyacela nakubazali, uhulumeni wendawo kanye namakhosi to encourage izingane to be serious about skills acquisition. Let us do this in honour of uBab'u Phungula.

We would also like thank the Buhlebezwe Local Municipality and the local chiefs for giving us land to build this Skills Centre. Honourable Nxumalo and members of your Executive Council: you have demonstrated that education is important and that you care about the future of our children. Thank you for the warm welcome today. We would also like to thank the Phungula family for being with us and for sharing uBab'u Phungula with the rest of the country. He was indeed a selfless man who dedicated his life to the struggle against apartheid.

Ngiyabonga