



higher education  
& training

Department:  
Higher Education and Training  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**ADDRESS BY THE MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING, DR BE  
NZIMANDE AT THE SOUTH AFRICAN DEMOCRATIC TEACHERS UNION'S  
8<sup>th</sup> NATIONAL CONGRESS ON 2 OCTOBER 2014**

Cde President Maphila

National Executive members of SADTU

Leadership of the Tripartite Alliance

Esteemed Guests

Comrades and Friends

I thank you for the privilege of inviting me to speak at your 8<sup>th</sup> National Congress. It is an important event in your calendar as it allows space for introspection and evaluation of what has been, and provides the opportunity for the organisation to position itself for the year ahead through the policy decisions it makes, and actions that result from these policies.

The South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) is a significant player in the social, economic and educational fabric of South Africa, and there can be no denying that it has a vital contribution to make in the continued growth of the country, both as an organisation as well as through the actions and contributions of its members.

It is my belief that education is one of our primary levers for combating ignorance, prejudice and poverty and must continue to be foregrounded in our efforts to maintain and build on the gains that have been made through the democratic revolution. Education, economic development and social development are interdependent and the Department of Higher Education and Training, together with the Department of Basic Education and teacher unions, has a significant role to play in supporting the system to provide high quality learning opportunities for our youth to enable them to access the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to productively enter the economy and contribute to our country's developmental trajectory.

My Ministry and the Department of Higher Education and Training has worked continuously over the last five years to build a viable post-school education and

training system that provides increasing opportunities to many more South Africans than ever before. Some of the key achievements over this period include:

- Substantial increases in financial support for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) college and university students through the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS), with NSFAS disbursing more than R9 billion in the 2014 academic year thereby opening up access to post-school education and training opportunities to more poor and working class students than ever before;
- Increasing the focus on the TVET sector and opportunities for our youth to be productively educated in technical and vocational fields, especially the development of artisans and other mid-level occupations;
- Expanding the TVET sector by developing 12 new college campuses, which are currently under construction;
- Establishing three new universities, i.e. the Sol Plaatje University in the Northern Cape, the University of Mpumalanga in Mpumalanga, and Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University in Gauteng;
- Rolling out a major infrastructure development programme across our university sector, especially at the historically disadvantaged institutions, to ensure that there is a more equitable distribution of resources across the sector and that all our university students begin to have access to quality teaching and learning spaces;
- Reconfiguring the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETA) landscape to respond more effectively to the skills development needs in the country;
- Finalising the White Paper on Post-school Education and Training; and
- Rolling out the Department's responsibilities with respect to the *Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development (2011-2025)*, which we jointly developed with the Department of Basic Education and yourselves as well as other key stakeholders.

It must be acknowledged that we are not yet where we want to be, and that there is still much more to be done. Access must be broadened, particularly access to quality post-school education and training opportunities for the poor and marginalised. We

also are conscious of the fact that access without success will be an empty promise and therefore as we broaden access through creating more opportunities and providing funding for our students, we need to ensure improved academic support and quality teaching and learning across our institutions.

How do we change this around?

To this end, we are currently working on a framework for staffing South African Universities, which outlines a comprehensive transformative approach to developing future generations of academics through the recruitment and development of new academic staff, interventions to improve the capacity of existing academic staff and the recruitment of additional staff on a short-term or part-time basis, and in particular black academic staff to address their under-representation at all levels in the sector.

Whilst the demographic profile of students and staff in post-school education and training is changing, more needs to happen to ensure that the post-school education and training system is reflective of the South Africa demography across all institutions. Success and graduation rates continue to reflect past history, with white and middle class students faring far better than black and working class students.

We are struggling to attract and retain quality young academics, especially black and women academics.

Issues of affordability of post-school education, the relevance and range of post-school education and training opportunities that are available, the quality of provision by the wide range of post-school education and training providers and the effective absorption of graduates into the workplace are other issues that we are working to address.

The White Paper on Post-School Education and Training puts forward our thinking in relation to how we continue to address the challenges that still exist, and at the same time grow a state-of-the-art post-school education and training system.

What positive contribution can SADTU make to our efforts to grow the scope and quality of the post-school education and training system? This important question requires some introspection.

For example, what role can teachers who are SADTU members play to ensure that school leavers are better equipped to manage the demands of post-school education and training? How can SADTU assist to ensure that school leavers understand the wider range of education and training opportunities that are available in the post-school sector, and advocate for the taking up of the various options? Your members' role in supporting and developing our youth, and the responsibility you have to ensure that you provide a quality service to the children in your care is immeasurable. We are continually bashed as government on the quality of our basic education and the poor skills of our learners and subject knowledge of our teachers. It is time for us to collectively deal with these issues. In addition, unions have a key role to play, not only in the professional development of our teachers, but also in ensuring that learners receive proper career guidance.

Every year thousands of learners leave the schooling system without having received adequate guidance on future career opportunities and information on what they need to achieve at school level in order to access those opportunities. The *Apply Now!* Campaign, which the department has rolled out over the last few years has been aimed at aim of creating awareness of career options and application procedures for post-school education and training.

One aspect that we collectively need to deal with as we grow and build a well-articulated and integrated post-school sector which is diverse and differentiated, is the need to ensure that TVET programmes become more and more attractive to our youth, and they start realising that the opportunities available through the college sector can and do lead to productive employment. We need to collectively assist the youth to recognise the different career opportunities available to them, and the various routes they can take.

SADTU contributed substantially to the development of the *Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development* that I launched together with Minister Motsheka in 2011, and SADTU continues to be involved in its implementation through the activities in which it is directly involved, and through its participation on the National Teacher Education and Development Committee. We are aware of the efforts of SADTU to ensure a strong professional development

focus through the establishment of a professional development institute. This is an important aspect of teachers taking responsibility for their own development.

Since publishing the integrated framework, a number of important strides have been made to improve and strengthen the teacher education system, which is the mandate of the Department of Higher Education and Training. I would like to report on some of the work that has been done and which should be celebrated.

You will recall that the Policy on the Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications was published in July 2011, which sets minimum standards for teacher education programmes. This policy foregrounds knowledge as a central competence for teachers. It also puts in place specific requirements related to the teaching practice component of teacher education programmes. This policy is driving a major curriculum reform process across out teacher education institutions, and universities are all gearing up to offer the new programmes. As the new programmes are brought on line, we should start seeing a qualitative improvement in teachers who complete the new qualification programmes, thus addressing some of the concerns related to quality and relevance.

In the same vein, my Department has published a qualification framework for teachers in the TVET College sector and this is now being implemented as well. We are currently designing a capacity improvement plan that will see the capacity of the system to produce TVET college lectures increase dramatically, in much the same way as has happened in relation to the capacity of the system to produce foundation phase teachers.

Processes have been put in place to establish new teacher education college campuses in provinces where they are needed. These new campus sites will fall under the jurisdiction of selected universities and offer higher education qualifications to teachers, in line with the Policy on Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications. The Department re-opened the former Ndebele College of Education in 2013 under the auspices of the University of Johannesburg and it was incorporated in 2014 into the newly established University of Mpumalanga as the Siyabuswa Teacher Education Campus. This campus is a dedicated teacher education campus that currently offers foundation phase teacher education and will

in the future offer the intermediate phase as well as continuing teacher development programmes.

The Department is working in a logical and step-wise fashion to develop the institutional capacity to ensure that the country is able to produce sufficient quality teachers for our schools by:

- ensuring full utilisation of university campuses that currently offer teacher education programmes;
- extending capacity by expanding the delivery of teacher education programmes to additional campus sites which will be identified on the basis of analysis of geographical reach and quantified need; and
- if it is identified that the existing capacity after being strengthened and extended, is still not able to meet national and provincial needs, new institutions will be opened.

Current expansion efforts at universities have resulted in a substantial growth in the number of new teacher graduates since 2008 increasing from 5 939 to just over 16 000 new teacher graduates in 2013.

Other expansion initiatives that are in process include:

- Two new universities have been established and both will offer the full range of teacher education programmes once they become fully established. Sol Plaatje University has established a campus in Kimberly from which a Bachelor of Education in Senior Phase and Further Education and Training Teaching is being offered. The University of Mpumalanga has established two campus sites, one in Nelspruit and the other in Siyabuswa. The Siyabuswa campus is developing into a dedicated teacher education campus with 200 students enrolled in a Bachelor of Education programme. Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University is being supported to expand teacher education at its Missionvale campus in Port Elizabeth through the establishment of a Foundation Phase Bachelor of Education programme. The Department has allocated significant financial resources to enable the development of new buildings to support the expansion of the campus.

- Durban University of Technology is being supported to substantially increase its teacher education capacity at its Indumiso campus in Imbali, Pietermaritzburg.
- Rhodes University is being supported to establish a full-time, contact Bachelor of Education in Foundation Phase Teaching in Grahamstown.

The expansion initiatives that are now in place will ensure that the country will be able to produce sufficient numbers of teachers. An enrolment planning process, recently concluded with universities, has indicated that the system will produce in excess of 23 000 new teachers annually by 2019, thus largely addressing the teacher supply-demand gap.

Discussions are underway regarding the further expansion of teacher education capacity in the Eastern Cape and Limpopo provinces which may result in former college sites in these provinces being re-used as teacher education facilities.

The Integrated Planning Framework also identified the lack of qualified and capable African language Foundation Phase teachers. This obviously has severe implications for the development of numeracy and literacy at a foundation level with African language learners in poor, rural contexts most severely affected.

A European Union-supported sector policy support programme to strengthen Foundation Phase teacher education is already being implemented by the Department. This programme has resulted in the number of universities involved in Foundation Phase teacher education increasing from 13 in 2008 to 21 in 2014. Fifteen universities are already offering programmes, and the remaining 6 are at various stages of approval prior to offering the programmes. The headcount enrolment in Foundation Phase initial teacher education programmes has grown from 10 073 students in 2009 to 19 987 in 2012, a 98 % increase over four years. The number of new Foundation Phase graduates has also increased from 1 341 in 2009 to 2 585 in 2012, a 93% increase.

Foundation Phase teacher education programmes will prepare teachers to teach in diverse language contexts, rather than only focus on the preparation of teachers for English or Afrikaans language contexts, as is presently the case in many institutions.

We have made great strides towards establishing Foundation Phase teaching as an important focus of Teacher Education programmes offered at our institutions.

These are exciting times for teacher education and development. Exciting times need committed people. The Department is indeed committed to the establishment of a strong teacher education and development system, and I am sure that SADTU is committed to this goal as well.

I wish you well as you continue to interrogate best practice in these important areas, and as you consider what your organisation's contributions can and should be towards these national goals. There is still much important work to be done and I am confident that SADTU will rise to the expectation and make its contribution.

I thank you.