

ADDRESS BY THE MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND INNOVATION, DR  
BLADE NZIMANDE ON THE OCCASION OF THE SOD-TURNING CEREMONY OF KWA-  
MPUMUZA SKILLS DEVELOPMENT CENTRE PIETERMARTIZBURG – KWAZULU NATAL

09 September 2022

Programme Director

Premier Nomusa Dube-Ncube;

uMgundundlovu District Mayor, Cllr Mzi Zuma;

Msunduzi Local Municipality Mayor, Cllr Mzimkhulu Thebolla;

Chairpersons of the CETA and W&RSETA Board, Mr Thabo Masombuka and Mr Reggie Sibiya and members of the Boards;

CEOs of the CETA and W&RSETA, Mr Tom Mkhwanazi and Mr Malusi Shezi;

uMgungundlovu TVET College Council led by the Chairperson;

CEO of uMgungundlovu TVET College, Ms Ntshangase;

Officials of the Department of Higher Education and Training led by the DDGs: Skills and TVETs;

Principals of Coastal, Elangeni, eThekweni and Umfolozi TVET Colleges;

AmaKhosi akulendawo;

CEOs of other SETAs;

Community members;

Members of the media

Ladies and gentlemen

Good morning, Sanibonani,

Our SETAs have always been trailblazers in the implementation of skills development programmes for many years through various innovative programmes and projects.

It is a great pleasure for me to join you this morning for another landmark milestone in skills development through our SETAs.

I am also grateful that all of you are here to break ground for the construction of the Kwa-Mpumuza Skills Development centre. This centre will not only be important for the local communities here, but it is of importance to the entire province and our country at large.

Collaboration between the SETAs and institutions of learning is what we have been advocating for and once again the CETA and W&RSETA is setting a sterling example of the great work that can be achieved through partnerships.

Ladies and gentlemen

September marks Public Service Month (PSM) in our country. It is an integrated government wide programme that encompasses:

- Public Service Month
- Heritage Day
- Tourism Month
- Police – Commemoration Day to remember the fallen heroes and heroines.

This Public Service Month serves as a reminder of what it means to serve communities and to also look at the impact the government has, especially around issues of service delivery.

As part of the Public Service Month, public servants are expected to:

- Roll up their sleeves and spring-clean their service delivery points;
- Visit schools, hospitals, police stations and courts, talk to citizens, mediate the delivery of services and getting things done;
- Unblock the bottlenecks and red-tape in the delivery of services;
- Ensure the systems and infrastructure are working and use public resources efficiently to the benefit of the citizens; and
- Recommit themselves to belong, to care and to serve the people.

Today as a Department through the work of our SETAs and all our stakeholders involved, we are marking yet another gain in the achievement of our National Skills Development Plan (NSP).

The National Skills Development Plan's goal is to support the growth of the public college system as one of the key solutions to our skills challenges in South Africa. Similarly, the goal of the NSP is to provide access to critical skills to as many people as possible.

The leading CETA and W&RSETA is investing over R85 million towards the construction of Kwa-Mpumuzi Skills Development Centre (SDC) that will produce one of the highly scarce skills in South Africa – artisans. This is one of many projects under the SETA's special infrastructure programme for TVET colleges.

In the construction phases of the project, at least +-175 job opportunities will be created and more are expected on completion of the same; thereby assisting alleviating unemployment we are faced with in our country.

Once again, the leading 2 SETAs (CETA and W&RSETA) are demonstrating the power of collaboration – as SETAs must share best practice and learn from each other to improve our communities and fast track skilling of our nation.

This construction of this centre will greatly benefit the work of our Decade of the Artisan programme which is headed by the Deputy Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation whose goal is to produce 30 000 artisans annually by 2030.

The programme is in line with the goal of government's National Development Plan which has recognised the importance of investing in artisan programmes to grow our economy.

The Skills Development Centres are a bridge between main campuses of post-school learning opportunities, which are currently located in bigger towns and cities.

The Skills Development Centres are located within rural and townships communities in the main, thereby widening access to skills, learning and training opportunities especially for our unemployed youth.

It is also important that these facilities are used optimally to benefit as many as possible; hence importance for CETs programmes also to be run at this Centre.

I am not digressing from the focus of today's project but need to point out that the CET colleges are important in addressing the high unemployment rate among young people which has become a time ticking bomb if not attended to urgently.

This Centre is not privately owned by an individual but is a community asset and belongs to the state. It is on the same basis, that on completion it will be linked and handed over to the nearest TVET College of uMgungundlovu.

Through this centre, our students will no longer need to travel far distances to access education and be subjected to various challenges that come about with such migration.

This is a significant milestone in the delivery of our skills development programmes as it will increase and improve our capacity to produce skilled citizens and particularly artisans locally.

Ladies and gentlemen

Centres such as this are important in demonstrating to our young people that there are other opportunities in the TVET sector than universities and universities of technology.

To the students who are with us here this morning, I want to emphasize that it is really cool to be an artisan. You will make a good decision of considering to study at a TVET college. You will complete your studies with theoretical and practical skills that will prepare you for the world of work.

You will leave the college with skills that employers are looking for – TVET colleges produce highly employable graduates as research has shown. There are many opportunities for artisans, for employment and most importantly to create your own jobs.

I am glad to hear the Chairpersons of the SETAs refer to the collaboration with industry to ensure that our students will be able to obtain workplace experience as part of their learning. Solving the skills challenges in South Africa is a collective effort of the SETAs, institutions of learning and industry.

I see many possibilities with this centre and the value chain that from agriculture to retail. This project will spur and become an anchor for this rural community development from different facets.

The centre will have the Administration Block, Hospitality Block, Retail Hub, Two Ceta Related Workshops, Lecture Halls, Gate House and Abattoir.

Amongst the skills development courses to be offered at the centre includes the Agro-processing – meat processing, Feed load management, Brick laying, Aircon and Refrigeration, Electrical, Painting and Decorating, Plumbing, Heat pump, Carpentry and joinery, Property maintenance, Geysers installation, Road maintenance.

The centre will also offer Retail related trades, Hair dressing, Restaurant management, Spa/Massage parlour and beauty management.

Ladies and gentlemen

On a delivery perspective, this project is aligned with government's District Development Model (DDM) that seeks to bring services closer to our people.

This is important in addressing urbanisation where young people flock to the cities to compete for limited opportunities instead of creating their own opportunities in their rural and township communities.

We therefore need to encourage young people to grow their local economies and projects such as these are enablers.

The SETAs will not stop at the construction of the centre but considered the greater benefit to socio-economic development of the people of Vulindlela highlighting that skills development is a fundamental part of economic development and the two cannot exist in isolation.

Ladies and gentlemen

We are aware of several construction projects in our country worth billions of rands that are being violently disrupted and even brought to a complete halt.

Some of these disruptions are the direct result of the scourge of corruption and state capture thus undermining government's effort to improve the lives of our citizens.

My Department, working with all our partners, will at all times strive to ensure that this project is not disturbed until its conclusion and hand-over.

Again, after it has been handed over, we will ensure that this facility continuously receives proper maintenance.

I must emphasise that it is incumbent on us to always guard our public infrastructure diligently.

As I conclude, I am encouraged by the presence of local government and traditional leadership at this event which demonstrates their commitment to the development of their communities.

Your role in this project starts today – you have a huge responsibility of ensuring that our people utilise this centre to benefit the community.

This centre must not become a white elephant but must develop our people, through continuous support from various SETAs helping to uplift the people of this community.

I have no doubt that the already established relations between my department, through our SETAs, the provincial and the local government in KwaZulu Natal and the private sector will ensure that we move from strength-to-strength in ensuring improved and sustainable livelihoods for the people and especially the youth of this area.

I therefore call upon the communities in which this centre is located to become vigilant and do all they can to defend and protect this centre as it is your own resource and facility.

Premier Nomusa Dube, I would like to thank you and the entire KZN government, the uMgundundlovu District Municipality and its local municipalities for your cooperation and support.

If it were not because of your unwavering commitment and support, we would not be here today.

Finally, I would like to convey my hearty congratulations to the CETA, W&RSETA, my Department of Higher Education and Training, individuals and business entities that were and are still to be involved in the construction of this centre for this outstanding achievement!

I implore other SETAs to join this great collaboration project here and in many other parts of our country.

The building of this centre is proof that my department and indeed this government is committed to skills and infrastructure development with a particular focus on young people.

I look forward to coming back and witness the complete project and most importantly the benefits of this centre to the people of this community and surrounding areas.

It is a great privilege for me to officiate today, the sod-turning of the CETA /W&RSETA's KwaMpumuza Skills Development Centre.

Ngiyabonga