



higher education
& training

Department:
Higher Education and Training
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DRAFT SPEECH FOR THE HONOURABLE MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING, DR. BE NZIMANDE, MP ON THE OCCASION OF TEAM SOUTH AFRICA SEND-OFF CEREMONY ON 29 SEPTEMBER 2017, LAKES HOTEL AND CONFERENCE CENTRE, AT 09:00.

Program Director

Deputy President of the Republic of South Africa, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa

Chairperson of the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Higher Education and Training, Ms Connie September

Director General of Higher Education and Training, Mr Gwebs Qonde

World Skills South Africa Official and Technical Delegates, Mr David Mabusela and Mr Andre Vermeulen

World Skills South Africa Acting Director, Ms Palesa Rakometsi

Team South Africa Leaders, Ms Mampela Malowa, Ms Gladys Phoshoko, Mr Johan de Beer and Mr David Mohlamme

Team South Africa Competitors

Competition Skills Areas Experts

Organised Business Representatives

Organised Labour Representatives

SETA CEOs

Principals of TVET Colleges

TVET Colleges Management and Lecturers

Higher Education and Training Officials

Families and Friends of Competitors

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

GOOD DAY

Today is not the day for normal long speeches but we are gathered to support and celebrate our national skills champions who displayed and proved their abilities in their respective skills areas during the Second Edition of our World Skills South Africa National Skills Competition held in February 2017.

Then, 122 competitors were accompanied by their respective competition experts and over three days were able to demonstrate their mental and physical abilities and strength across 22 competition areas. These competition areas in which they competed (such as Electrical, Mechanical, Civil, IT, Manufacturing and Services) form the bedrock on which our TVET colleges' education and training system is sustained. The Universities of Technology also offer these fields of study at a much higher applied level.

The enormous pressure which you experienced as competitors at national level will be much more extreme at international level as you will be competing with your counterparts from strong countries like China, Russia, Brazil, India, USA and others. The mental strength, character, high levels of discipline, focus, determination, endurance, technical knowledge and abilities, precision, problem solving skills, team work and time management skills which made you succeed will still be the critical success factors which will separate the best of the best competitors in Abu Dhabi.

To the experts, you will also experience this doubled pressure, yet at all times endeavor to support your champions within the observance of the competition rules. Remain ethical, fair and impartial in your important task of coaching your champions. I must assert that all these critical success elements are actually the cognitive and psychological factors which underpin our pedagogy and didactics across our education system which, given a chance, should be developed at massified levels, as early as from Early Childhood Development to Post School Education and Training.

The age limit for participation in these skills competition is 22 years which, in essence, conveys the message that strategic skills development actually occurs

before the period of transition from school/college/university to work. Certainly the workplace environment refines and integrates these skills sets into producing a productive worker who deserves to earn a living wage. I must say I am honoured and humbled to stand before you and officially declare the DHET support for Team South Africa and wish you all the success in Abu Dhabi.

The global education and training comparative studies and research, some conducted by International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (UNEVOC) show that education and training systems which have a strong tendency towards technical, vocational and occupational component in their curricula have tended to survive the worst economic recessions and have constantly displayed quite low levels of youth unemployment.

They also tend to recover more quickly from negative impact arising from unpredictable global economic downturns as a result of the forever present volatility in the international market and the international political stage. Statistics South Africa confirms these international economic growth hypotheses. It will be hard to dispute that there is always a link between economic growth and the education and training system a country chooses. Switzerland amongst other countries is an example of a successful TVET system grounded on a dual approach to training where there is an established trust between government, business, labour and the community.

These studies and other national socio-economic dynamics have convinced us as government generally, and Higher Education and Training Department specifically, that the expansion and resourcing of the TVET Colleges sector is a critical priority for midlevel skills massification. The element of creating more workplaces, an onus on business cannot be overemphasised, it is extremely critical. As a united people and a developing country, in our various communities across all provinces, we need therefore to jointly inculcate a new culture of **“artisan skills recognition, respect and active participation”**.

Participation at the World Skills International competition is about being part of this new global movement on skills development, education and training. Surely this new way of doing things assists us in mapping a new reformed TVET education and training system which promises to improve the supply of requisite skills for industrialisation and digitalisation for a better economic growth path, democratised social cohesion and good citizenry.

This however does not exclude especially the Universities of Technology, though their participation is largely hi-tech in robotics and mechatronics. Industry participation is usually welcome in these competitions as they possess the actual capacity to set the tone for high standards of participation in the competition for TVET Colleges and Universities of Technology.

In December 2016 as a Department we presented our strategic thinking regarding artisan training in the country generally, wherein one of our key proposals is to pursue closer ties with industry. The WSSA space offers also an ideal platform to give meaning to that pursuit for closer collaboration.

We really expect some few international medals from this, asikwazi ukubulawa yindlala kuze kuyovalwa (we cannot go without medal always) even if we focus our competition on Brazil, Russia, India and China; our (BRICS) trade partners.

AND LASTLY, to all competitors, may your efforts bring you success. To all the competition experts, coaches and team leaders, may you shine the spirit of camaraderie, brotherhood and sisterhood during the competition.

I THANK YOU!