

**ADDRESS BY THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF HIGHER  
EDUCATION AND TRAINING, MR BUTI MANAMELA,  
TO THE G20 MINISTERIAL YOUTH SUMMIT**

**MADRID, SPAIN**

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Programme Director

Ministers Responsible for Youth of G20 countries

Ambassadors

Leaders of Youth Organisations

Ladies and Gentlemen

It gives me great pleasure to lead the South African delegation and to address this important Summit.

Young people represent an important positive force for social change. Their growth and development is intrinsically linked to the advancement and progress of our countries, regions and the world.

This Summit is an important one because it provides a valuable platform to position young people and policies that address and advance their interests on a national and global scale.

As this is a platform for learning, collaboration and sharing of best practices, allow me to share a few highlights from South Africa's youth development course.

National Youth Policies can be a guiding policy instrument to respond to the needs and aspirations of our youth and to address the critical youth development challenges that they face. National Youth Policies must be at the forefront of delivering a better future for young people including investments in youth and ensuring their meaningful participation in the economy.

South Africa's National Youth Policy 2020 prioritizes five key areas:

1. Enabling economic participation and transformation

2. Facilitating education, skills development and second chances
3. Health care and combating substance abuse
4. Facilitating nation building and social cohesion
5. Effective and responsive youth development institutions

Our National Youth Policy 2020 is evidenced based, well researched and widely consulted with young people. Each priority area has a set of policy and programme interventions. A National Monitoring and Evaluation Framework has been developed and is being implemented.

Education is one of the critical areas of the National Youth Policy. Nelson Mandela, reminded us that “education is the most powerful weapon that you can use to change the world.” Education is about developing human capabilities so that young people can play their rightful role in society.

The African Union's Agenda 2063 is premised on investing in the peoples of Africa through, amongst other things, expanding quality education. The African Youth Charter affirms that every young person shall have the right to good quality education. But still, quality education remains elusive for too many young Africans and young people from the developing world.

Education must remain a public good if we are serious about sustainable development. This requires targeted public investment in education for widening access and pursuing quality education outcomes.

Listening to the cries from young people, South Africa has recently introduced a policy of fee free higher education for the working class and the poor. This allows young people from poor and working class families to study for free at our public universities and Technical and Vocation Education and Training Colleges.

The South African government is making this critical investment for the present and future generations.

We are working hard at strengthening the quality of our technical and vocational training so that young people can take advantage of this opportunity. We are linking priority trades with our national infrastructure programme. Our centers of specialization in TVET colleges will offer 13 critical trades and occupations that are in short supply for our infrastructure and economic development projects. Through a partnership with industry bodies we are ensuring that the curriculum meets industry standards and needs.

With youth unemployment being a global development challenge, young people need jobs today and need to be prepared for the jobs of the future. They must meaningfully participate in our national and global economies.

The growth of small and medium enterprises are critical for the creation of jobs and economic growth. Young people must be at the centre of this growth. Our National Youth Development Agency, funds start up youth entrepreneurs with grants up to the value of 13 000 Euros, and couples this with business development support services. Through this initiative we have created 2500 new youth driven enterprises in the last three years with more than 10 000 jobs created.

Together with our developmental financing institutions, we have established a 180 million euro fund focused solely on youth owned enterprises and we have introduced preferential public procurement for the benefit of youth owned businesses.

We also understand that young people need access to job opportunities. Our Employment Tax Incentive provides a tax rebate for companies hiring young first time workers.

Our President has also introduced the Youth Employment Services, driven by the private sector, to provide a year-long internship opportunity for young people who have never worked before. Over a million young people will benefit from this intervention.

South Africa, with its history of apartheid and separation, needs more social cohesion. We see our National Youth Service Programme as a key policy intervention to advance social cohesion. The National Youth Service aims to reconstruct South African society by developing the abilities of young people through service and learning. It builds character and enables young people to give back to society while fostering patriotism.

The G20 group of countries have correctly identified youth development as a critical issue for advancing the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda. There is much that we can do to develop relevant policies and programmes that advance development.

We can learn a lot from each other and this G20 Youth Ministerial Summit provides an opportunity to strengthen and take forward the youth development agenda.

But as we do this, we must not forget a critical constituency – young people themselves. Too often as governments, we make the mistake of doing things for young people and not with them. Young women and men must be a part of the conversations. Their input, participation and validation is invaluable. Their voices must be heard. We must work with them in advancing the important agenda of youth development.

Allow me to close with the introductory words of our National Youth Policy – “We are generation 2020. We don’t want a hand-out; we want a hand up.”

South Africa supports the consolidation of a permanent cooperation forum for youth development within the G20.

I thank you.