

**Speech to be delivered by the Acting Premier, Mr. Vusi Shongwe at
the Youth Career Expo in Mbombela on 24 June 2015.**

Programme Director and MEC for Education, Mrs. Reginah Mhaule

Members of the Executive Council

Executive Mayor of Mbombela Local Municipality, Cllr Sibusiso
Mathonsi

Executive Mayors

Speakers from Municipalities

Director General; Dr. Nonhlanhla Mkhize

Heads of Departments

Municipal Managers

Senior Managers and Officials of Government at all levels

Leadership of the NYDA

Representatives from Political parties

Representatives from our sponsors for this event

Representatives from Youth Formations

Representatives from the Media

Ladies and Gentlemen and

The Youth of Mpumalanga

Sanibonani,

Let me take this opportunity and express my greatest gratitude towards everyone who is in attendance today, we appreciate that you were able to set aside your busy schedules to honour our invitation and be part of this historical event where the youth of the province show its determination to change the course of their lives.

Allow me to also take this time to extend my greatest appreciation to the Executive Mayor of Mbombela Local Municipality, Cllr S.P Mathonsi for the great hospitality we have receive from the provincial capital. We truly appreciate this.

I am always delighted when the province hosts events of this fashion, where young people are the main focus, and are given the opportunity to explore and open their minds to new opportunities that will brighten their future.

It is also befitting that we also appreciate the Honorable Premier, Mr. DD Mabuza and the executive council who conceptualized this event and continue to make it possible for this programme to come into fruition under the Theme: Youth Moving South Africa Forward.

Addressing the youth

This theme spells it out for you and all the youth of the land that each and every one of you should take some action and responsibility for his or her future and that will inadvertently and purposefully lead to a growth in development for the whole country.

The future, growth and development opportunities of the province are in the hands of the youth gathered here today, it may seem like a simple statement, but it is the truth. As a government, we therefore cannot turn a blind eye and expect you to find your way on your own through a maze to a better brighter future.

We are a government and most importantly a nation that cares for its youth, and working together we have fought against many battles that previously acted as hurdles that hindered our growth as a people. We therefore cannot let the plight of unemployment, poverty and inequality reign supreme.

The Career Expo therefore resonates from the 2014 Youth Summit where the province resolved to put the youth Empowerment Agenda at the centre of its entire development endeavor.

It serves as a platform to showcase opportunities that can be exploited towards the personal advancement of our youth; while hoping that the youth of the province grabs this opportunity with both hands.

Young people, you should always remember that it is of a useless nature to only dream of a better life, and not wake up from that dream to pursue it.

It may even sound better if I use the popular phrase “Uzoyithola kanjani uma uhleli ekhoneni”.

Do something valuable

I want to implore all of you to: **DO SOMETHING VALUABLE** as you explore, negotiate and maneuver your ways through challenges in your quest to improve your lives and those of other South Africans.

My advice would be for you to let the problems in the world dictate what you do, rather than forcing a preconceived pathway written “success,” to be your inspiration. As a people of South Africa and Mpumalanga we need to do something that genuinely helps others and makes the world a better place in a major way. That’s the way to have a happy, fulfilled life.

I want you to challenge yourselves and think ahead of your years and age. Think about yourself at 65, the ripe age of retirement sitting down and reflecting on your contributions and achievements in life. What would give more fulfillment? Material gain in the form of monetary value or having contributed valuably to life and humanity?

I guess everyone can find his or her own answer but I want each and every one of you to ponder on this question and reflect on making a valuable contribution.

The National Youth Development Policy

The career expo also speaks to the Youth Development Policy in line with the National Development Plan, as the goal of this expo is to empower young people who are able to realise their full potential and understand their roles and responsibilities in making a meaningful contribution to the development of a non – racial prosperous South Africa.

Coming together as different stakeholders that share the same sentiments can only progress to an even bigger avalanche of hope to our citizens.

This means that while the NYDA remains a major catalyst for youth development, we are also supporting them and ensuring that their goals which include the youth development machinery must be consistent with the location of youth development programmes at the centre of transformation and the vision of the National Development Plan which is to bring about a prosperous and more equitable society by 2030.

The Provincial Economic Growth and Development Path

The Provincial Economic Growth and Development Path appreciates the socio - economic pressures that confronts our people in the province mainly unemployment, poverty and inequality. Despite the gains we have made with regards to improved economic growth, the economy remains one of the most inequitable in the world.

Moreover, there are structural constraints in the economy, including a decline in mining and agriculture employment, insufficient beneficiation, a low savings rate, investment concentrated either in capital-intensive or energy-intensive sectors, bottlenecks and backlogs in infrastructure, skills shortages, a current account deficit in a resource boom, reliance on short-term inflows, consumption - driven growth, and the increasing financialisation of the economy, strengthening of retail and the real economy (manufacturing and agriculture) squeezed between the two.

Mpumalanga, and South Africa as a whole, is faced with the task of replacing apartheid divisions, inequality and impoverishment with a more equitable and inclusive economy. The government has been committed to drive towards national emancipation that is in a very real way bound up with economic emancipation.

In a drive to negate the effects of the divisive and impoverishing apartheid policies, government is providing to the majority of our people access to assets, including land and finance; quality education and certified skills; decent government services; and access to market institutions.

This career expo is testimony to Government's commitment to realising the dream of making a better life to all as the focus of the Growth Path is to improve the labour absorption of the economy i.e. the jobs yields of each billion rand of investment and each one percent of growth in GDP as well as to reduce carbon emissions and to strengthen the link between science and technology on the one hand and growth and jobs on the other.

The New Growth Path seeks to provide bold, imaginative and effective strategies to create the millions of new jobs South Africa needs. It also lay out a dynamic vision for how we can collectively achieve a more developed, democratic, cohesive and equitable economy and society over the medium term, in the context of sustained growth.

The strategy sets out critical markers for employment creation and growth and identifies where viable changes in the structure and character of production can generate a more inclusive and greener economy over the medium to long run. To that end, it combines macroeconomic and microeconomic interventions.

The Human Resource Development Strategy

The province has also adopted the Provincial Human Resource Development Strategy, the Strategy, which is a product of a partnership between government and the private sector within the province, has identified skills required in the province both in the public and private sectors to present tangible strategic actions to meet and retain these skill requirements of all sectors within the province.

It is also incumbent on the youth of the province to take up the gauntlet to fight the triple challenges of poverty, inequality and unemployment. It is through the Provincial Human Resource Development Strategy, that government's focus on bursaries, skills development and capacity building programmes is placed. Let all the youth of our province be encouraged to take advantage of all the opportunities that government offer.

The 2015 Mpumalanga Career Expo

Mpumalanga Province is endowed in mineral wealth and agricultural land where ownership and career moves can be taken. This career expo is thus intended to be a catalyst to the youth of our province to take advantage of the opportunities available.

As you can attest, there are many exhibitors in our midst ranging from private companies, governmental departments and institutions of higher education. Please make sure that you gather all the information you need to be assisted. As a province, we are happy to be at your service.

Conclusion

Let me borrow the words of Franz Kafka, the renowned German writer and novelist who once said, " Life's splendor forever lies in wait about each one of us in all its fullness, but veiled from view, deep down, invisible, far off. It is there, though, not hostile, not reluctant, not deaf. If you summon it by the right word, by its right name, it will come.

Association with human beings lures one into self-observation.

It is not necessary that you leave the house. Remain at your table and listen. Do not even listen, only wait. Do not even wait, be wholly still and alone. The world will present itself to you for its unmasking, it can do no other, in ecstasy it will writhe at your feet."

These profound words teach us the virtue of self-discovery and patience. In our search for the future let us exercise patience and self-discovery is imminent. I wish you all the best in your walk to a better future, this is not just your future but the future of Mpumalanga and the Nation. I can see a bright light at the end of the tunnel.

Ngiyabonga.