



**MESSAGE OF SUPPORT BY THE EXECUTIVE CHAIRPERSON OF THE NYDA,  
DR. SUNSHINE MYENDE, ON THE OCCASION OF NSFAS DRIVE IN  
KHAYELITSHA**

13 November 2025

*Programme Director,*

*Deputy Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr Nomusa Dube-Ncube,*

*Officials of NSFAS, DHET, NYDA and SETA's*

*Educators, learners, parents, and the resilient community of Khayelitsha,*

First, let me start by stating it is an honour to bring the voice of the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) to this important gathering. As the NYDA, we recognise that access to higher education is not a privilege but a democratic right and we are honoured and privileged to be working with the Department of Higher Education and NSFAS in ensuring that young people from the most disadvantaged communities are not left behind in the pursuit of that right. Our work during the current period has demonstrated a critical concept underlying all developmental states: progress is made when institutions, communities, and leadership align around a coherent and shared vision.

Deputy Minister, as you are aware, our government has worked hard to ensure that our country overcomes inequality, and as an Agency, we recognise that every program that increases access to higher education is an act of social justice.

For the NYDA board, the goal is to rebuild the connection between aspiration and opportunity, as well as between the dream of democracy and its material manifestation.



Education, as we all know, is more than just a personal benefit; it is a public tool for equality. When a child from Khayelitsha gains access to university, the entire community benefits.

Deputy Minister and Acting NSFAS CEO, this year's application drive has demonstrated the power of collaboration.

Together, we have been to the outskirts of our country, where access to services is critical. Our combined efforts led us to Orange Farm's Thetha Secondary, Ongoye in Empangeni, Franschhoek Valley, Ngqushwa, KwaMashu, Umlazi and other areas, where we took government services to the people, bridging the gap between public promise and public experience.

Deputy Minister, that is the spirit of the NYDA: to meet young people where they are. This work reflects our conviction that the greatest threat to democracy is inequality, not only the inequality of income, but of opportunity, dignity, and imagination.

Professor Achille Mbembe reminds us that, *"The scandal of democracy in our time is that while it promises equality, it continues to produce inequality—deep, structural, and enduring."*

To us, that is more than just a phrase from scholastic works; it is a warning that we must take seriously. Because when disparity becomes the norm, democracy becomes empty. When poverty remains, freedom is abstract.

Because the truth is Deputy Minister: inequality is the greatest threat to our democracy. It is not only a question of income, but of access, that is access to opportunity, to information, to spaces where one's humanity can be fully realised.

However, through this work, we are bridging that gap between exclusion and participation, between potential and fulfilment and between the promise of democracy and its lived experience.



Our task through NSFAS, through the NYDA, and through every developmental intervention is to ensure that democracy is not an empty ritual, but a lived reality.

CEO, as we carry out our responsibilities, we must always remember that inequality is not a natural situation; it is the result of historical and institutional arrangements. Therefore, as agents of change in South Africa today, we must adopt a fighting attitude against inequality – in access, education, gender, and in power.

Bantu basekhaya, as we approach the 16 Days of Activism for No Violence Against Women and Children, let us remember that gender-based violence is a public and systemic failure, not a private tragedy. Our government has done tremendous work in fighting GBV, however so long as it persists we must continue the chant against GBV.

Furthermore, it is critical that we discuss GBV on these platforms because some of its victims are present in this venue, that is filled with the potential of our country. And if we do not speak out against GBV on these platforms, the very potential that we've brought here today might be lost. In other words, young girls must know that they are not alone, and that we always believe and support them.

Moreover, and importantly the conversation we must urgently have is that GBV is rooted in poverty, dependency, and dispossession.

The emerging Purple Campaign — calling for the end of GBV — challenges us to confront the social conditions that make violence against women possible and sustainable.

At the NYDA, we understand that a young woman's ability to walk away from abuse is directly linked to her access to education and economic opportunity.

That is why these programmes are not peripheral — they are life-saving. The time has come, Deputy Minister, for us to resist the temptation of symbolic equality — the practice of placing women in positions merely to satisfy quotas. Instead, we must embrace the power of meaningful representation, recognising its potential to drive real transformation and to build



the institutional mechanisms capable of ending crises such as gender-based violence and femicide.

The NYDA believes that youth development is not an adjunct to democracy, but it is the engine of its renewal. A democracy that does not empower its youth is a democracy rehearsing its own decline. Each NSFAS application processed is an act of reconstruction. Each learner reached is a reminder that government cares, that democracy can still deliver, and that hope is still rational.

To the young people of Khayelitsha, I'm sure as I was told growing up you also know that, "Umntu ngumntu ngabantu" — I am because you are.

Your success will never belong to you alone; it will belong to your community, your family, and your generation. That is the meaning of shared prosperity and collective advancement.

Deputy Minister, this is why the NYDA is honoured to walk alongside NSFAS and DHET in this work because in giving young people access to education, we are taking steps toward a future of no unemployment and no poverty.

It is now my privilege to introduce a leader who has long understood that transformation is not a slogan but a system — a woman whose intellect, courage, and public service continue to inspire many of us, the Deputy Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr Nomusa Dube-Ncube.

Enkosi. Thank you.