

TO ALL MEDIA/ NEWS EDITORS
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NYDA WELCOMES SONA 2026 COMMITMENTS TO JOBS, SKILLS, AND ECONOMIC INCLUSION

The National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) has welcomed President Cyril Ramaphosa's 2026 State of the Nation Address (SONA) as a defining moment for young South Africans. With the President declaring that the nation has reached a turning point, the NYDA recognises a renewed sense of optimism among the youth, who are eager to participate meaningfully in the economy.

While acknowledging the positive outlook on economic stabilisation, the NYDA remains acutely aware of the persistent challenges facing young people, particularly the persistently high youth unemployment rate. As the Agency mandated to drive economic transformation and youth development, the NYDA confirmed its readiness to translate the President's commitments into actionable programmes.

The Agency expressed strong support for the President's focus on entrepreneurship, welcoming the announcement of R2.5 billion in funding for over 180,000 small enterprises, coupled with R1 billion in guarantees and amendments to the National Credit Act. These interventions directly address concerns raised by young entrepreneurs at the recent Presidential Youth Roundtable in Khayelitsha regarding access to funding, safety, and operational barriers. The NYDA views these financial mechanisms as essential to lowering barriers for youth enterprise development.

On skills development, the NYDA welcomed the commitment to overhaul the system through reforms to Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) and strengthening Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges. The Agency stressed that training must lead to real opportunities and pledged to collaborate with government departments to ensure that young people, especially in rural areas, are connected to these reformed institutions.

The expansion of public employment programmes, including the Presidential Employment Stimulus and the Expanded Public Works Programme, received the Agency's endorsement. Through its National Youth Service, the NYDA committed to serving as a primary implementation partner, ensuring opportunities reach young people across all wards, providing income support and work experience. The Agency

