

TO ALL MEDIA/ NEWS EDITORS

JOHANNESBURG, GAUTENG

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THE NYDA HOSTS HISTORIC YOUTH CONSULTATION 2025 – A NATIONAL PLATFORM TO UNITE THE VOICE OF SOUTH AFRICA’S YOUNG PEOPLE

The National Youth Development Agency (NYDA), in partnership with the South African Youth Council (SAYC) and several youth-led movements, political formations, and civil society organisations, successfully hosted the Youth Consultation 2025 in Johannesburg — the first of its kind since the dawn of democracy and the establishment of the NYDA.

This historic gathering marks a new chapter in South Africa’s youth development trajectory through this platform that sought to unite diverse youth voices across political, social, and geographic divides to shape a shared vision for the country’s future. The Consultation was a space not just for reflection, but for collective renewal — reminding us that the future of this nation must be co-authored by its youth.

Participants engaged robustly on critical issues including:

- Youth unemployment: addressing structural barriers that continue to marginalise young people and developing pathways into meaningful work and enterprise.
- Education and skills alignment: reforming the education system to match the needs of a changing, digital economy and a rapidly transforming labour market.
- Youth disengagement: Rebuilding civic trust and encouraging active participation in democratic processes.

- Inclusivity and access: Ensuring that youth development policies reach all young people — rural and urban, employed and unemployed, formally educated and otherwise — leaving no one behind.

Across these discussions, there was a resounding call for the NYDA and its partners to move beyond consultation into coordinated action — transforming insights into policy, and policy into measurable impact.

Young people called for a renewed agency that is agile, transparent, and responsive to their needs — an NYDA that works with communities, not only for them; one that recognises that development is a process, and not an event. Participants emphasised the need to:

- Localise solutions through community needs assessments in every district, ensuring that NYDA programmes respond to specific regional realities.
- Champion the green economy and youth cooperatives, particularly in townships and rural areas, including new opportunities in e-waste recycling and sustainable energy.
- Address youth mental health as part of a holistic approach to empowerment. Realising the high levels of youth unemployment continue to contribute significantly to mental health challenges, with many young people experiencing anxiety and depression as a result of prolonged joblessness and economic exclusion.
- Encourage second chances for youth with criminal records — ensuring rehabilitation and reintegration into the workforce.

The NYDA Executive Chairperson Dr. Sunshine Myende stated, “Through this Consultation we hope to reignite the spirit of collective action among South Africa’s youth. This is a platform that reminds us that our democracy is strongest when young

people are at its centre — not as spectators, but as active participants in shaping its direction.

The NYDA is committed to taking forward every insight, every demand, and every idea that emerged from this gathering — ensuring that the voices of young people are not only heard, but reflected in the policies and programmes, that define our nation's future.”

The NYDA remains firmly committed to ensuring that the outcomes of this Consultation inform both the Integrated Youth Development Strategy (IYDS) and the broader national development agenda. This process will continue across provinces to ensure that every young person, wherever they are, has a voice in shaping the policies that affect their lives.

In the spirit of unity and progress, the Agency calls on all sectors — government, business, labour, and civil society — to work together in accelerating youth empowerment. True transformation will only succeed when the energy and creativity of South Africa's youth become the cornerstone of the nation's growth.

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