



SPEAKING NOTES FOR EXECUTIVE CHAIRPERSON
DR SUNSHINE MYENDE

**MCSA THE FIRST TRIENNIAL CONVENTION
MULDERSDRIFT, GAUTENG**

22 OCTOBER 2026



SPEAKING NOTES BY THE EXECUTIVE

CHAIRPERSON OF THE NYDA ON THE OCCASION OF THE MCSA TRIENNIAL CONVENTION – NYDA Presentation | ±60 minutes

22 October 2026

SLIDES 1–3: OPENING, MANDATE AND STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Programme Director

Leadership of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa

Members of the Wesley Guild

Distinguished guests

And most importantly, the young people gathered here today.

Good afternoon.

It is a pleasure to join you at this important gathering, where young people are reflecting on their purpose, their responsibilities and the contribution they can make to their communities and our country.

Your theme, “Responsible Grace in Motion: Relocated, Repositioned, Ready for the Other Side,” invites us to think beyond the desire for change and consider what meaningful change requires of us.

Being repositioned is not just about arriving somewhere different. It is about how we respond to new opportunities, how we confront the challenges around us and how we use our abilities to make a difference in the lives of others.

For me, the idea of responsible grace speaks to the relationship between what we believe and what we do. Our values become meaningful when they are reflected in our decisions, our leadership and our willingness to serve.

This connects directly with the mandate of the National Youth Development Agency.

The NYDA facilitates, coordinates and supports youth development interventions that contribute to the social and economic empowerment of young people in South Africa. Our work includes entrepreneurship, business support, skills development, employment-related interventions and the National Youth Service Programme.



Our programmes align with the National Development Plan 2030, the National Youth Policy 2030 and the Integrated Youth Development Strategy, approved by Cabinet.

These frameworks recognise that youth development cannot be achieved by one institution acting alone. It requires coordinated action across government, business, civil society, communities and institutions such as the MCSA.

Our responsibility is to help create the conditions in which young people can access opportunities, develop their capabilities and participate meaningfully in the development of our country.

That is why partnerships matter. They help connect institutions, resources and expertise with the needs and aspirations of young people.

SLIDES 4–10: NYDA PROGRAMMES - CONNECTING YOUNG PEOPLE TO OPPORTUNITY

The NYDA's work responds to the different barriers young people face when seeking to participate in the economy.

For some, the challenge is accessing finance to start a business. For others, it is acquiring the skills employers require, gaining work experience or finding reliable information about available opportunities.

Our interventions seek to respond to these different needs.

Through the NYDA grant programme, eligible South African youth aged 18 to 35 can apply for funding ranging from R1 000 to R250 000, subject to the programme's requirements. Eligible applicants include individuals, private companies and cooperatives that are 100% South African youth-owned.

What is important about this programme is that funding is accompanied by business development support. Applicants are required to complete business management and life-skills training, while mentorship and coaching form part of the support offered. Additional services include business consultancy, market linkages and assistance with establishing cooperatives.

This matters because starting a business and sustaining one are two different challenges. Young entrepreneurs need more than capital. They need the knowledge and support to manage their finances, understand their markets, reach customers and make informed decisions as their businesses develop.



The NYDA also provides work-based interventions to help young people prepare for employment. These include CV and motivational-letter preparation, interview preparation, job-readiness and life-skills training, and connections to opportunities such as learnerships, internships and skills programmes through relevant partners.

Platforms such as SAYouth and the National Pathway Management Network provide additional channels for accessing information about opportunities.

My message to young people is simple: seek information, prepare yourselves and actively pursue the opportunities available to you. Do not assume that support is beyond your reach without first finding out what is available and what the requirements are.

At the same time, we must recognise that access to information is only one part of the solution. Young people also need institutions that can help connect them to relevant services and guide them towards appropriate opportunities.

The MCSA and its community structures can help strengthen that connection by improving awareness of available services and encouraging young people to engage with the appropriate channels.

This does not mean that every young person will automatically qualify for funding or placement. Eligibility criteria and programme requirements remain applicable. It means that we should work together to make information more accessible and help young people understand the pathways open to them.

Economic participation is essential, but youth development is broader than employment and entrepreneurship. It also involves leadership, service, social responsibility and the ability to contribute to the wellbeing of others.

This brings me to the National Youth Service Programme.

SLIDES 11–13: NATIONAL YOUTH SERVICE - TURNING RESPONSIBILITY INTO ACTION

The National Youth Service Programme is particularly relevant to our engagement today because it provides a structured way for young people to contribute to community development while gaining skills and work experience.

The programme mobilises young people aged 18 to 35 to participate in activities that respond to community needs. Its focus areas include sports, arts and entertainment, the restoration and maintenance of public spaces, support for early childhood



development and school learners, and activities relating to antenatal care and child nutrition.

The underlying principle is that young people should have meaningful opportunities to contribute to improving their communities while developing capabilities that can support their own growth.

Community service is not a substitute for employment, nor can it resolve every challenge facing young people. However, when properly organised and supported, it can build teamwork, discipline, leadership, practical experience and a stronger sense of civic responsibility.

Consider what can be achieved when young people work together around an identified community need: restoring a public space, supporting vulnerable residents, conducting a social-awareness campaign or contributing to an initiative that benefits children and families.

Such activities require planning, appropriate support and clear responsibilities. They must also respond to genuine community priorities rather than simply organising activities for the sake of being seen to act.

This is where the Wesley Guild's four C's: Consecration, Comradeship, Creativity and Community development - can find practical expression.

Consecration can inform a commitment to service and ethical leadership. Comradeship can strengthen cooperation and collective responsibility. Creativity can encourage young people to develop responses to local challenges. Community development provides the space in which those values become tangible contributions.

The opportunity before us is to connect the willingness of young people to serve with structured activities, relevant partners and clearly identified community needs.

Through the NYDA–MCSA partnership, there is scope to explore how the National Youth Service Programme can support community-based interventions, with participating structures, responsibilities and activities established through agreed implementation arrangements.

We should move beyond simply saying that young people must contribute to their communities. We should create practical opportunities for them to do so, while ensuring that their participation is meaningful and that the outcomes can be assessed.



SLIDES 14–16: THE NYDA–MCSA PARTNERSHIP - FROM SHARED PURPOSE TO PRACTICAL COLLABORATION

Young people, this brings me to the partnership between the National Youth Development Agency and the Methodist Church of Southern Africa.

In August this year, the NYDA and the MCSA entered into a partnership formalised through a three-year Memorandum of Understanding.

The partnership creates an opportunity to strengthen collaboration between a government youth development institution and a faith-based institution with established community structures and networks.

The briefing document recognises the interconnected challenges affecting young people, including unemployment, substance abuse, crime, violence, social exclusion and declining civic responsibility. These challenges cannot be addressed effectively through isolated interventions. They require cooperation, sustained engagement and a shared commitment to supporting young people.

The partnership seeks to advance youth development through National Youth Service, skills development, employability, entrepreneurship, leadership, volunteerism, community participation and social cohesion. It also provides for collaboration on initiatives aimed at preventing crime, violence, substance abuse and other social ills affecting young people.

There are several areas in which this cooperation can be explored.

First, community development and National Youth Service. We can identify local priorities and consider structured activities such as community clean-ups, social-awareness campaigns and support for vulnerable groups.

Second, youth leadership, mentorship and life skills. There is scope to explore how church youth leaders, community leaders and other suitably qualified mentors can contribute to young people's development.

Third, social cohesion and the prevention of social ills. The partnership provides a framework for exploring coordinated initiatives with relevant stakeholders, including government departments, educational institutions and community organisations.

Fourth, access to youth development services. We can strengthen awareness of NYDA and MCSA services and help young people identify the information and support relevant to their circumstances.



These areas are connected. Young people need pathways into employment, entrepreneurship and sustainable livelihoods, but they also need opportunities to develop leadership, participate in community life and contribute to a more cohesive society.

We must, however, distinguish between the partnership agreement and its implementation. The MoU establishes the framework for collaboration; it does not mean that every proposed activity has already been finalised, funded or scheduled.

The briefing provides for a joint programme or implementation plan to identify priority interventions, the roles and responsibilities of each institution, participating communities, timelines, expected outputs and arrangements for monitoring, reporting and accountability. Resource mobilisation remains subject to agreed responsibilities, available resources, approved budgets and applicable governance requirements.

The value of this partnership will ultimately be demonstrated not by the agreement we have signed, but by the coordinated work we undertake and the difference it makes to young people and their communities.

For the Wesley Guild, this is an opportunity to contribute to the conversation about community priorities, youth participation and the practical ways in which the partnership can be taken forward.

SLIDES 17–19: NYDA’S REACH AND THE IMPORTANCE OF MEASURABLE IMPACT

The NYDA presentation reflects the scale of our interventions across youth development and economic participation.

According to the approved figures in the presentation, the Agency has supported more than 450,000 young people across its programmes, including more than 4,000 young persons with disabilities. The presentation also records 6,804 young people supported to start businesses, more than 200,000 young people trained, and a database of more than 1,000 youth-led non-profit organisations.

The presentation identifies impact achieved between 2021 and 2025 across three beneficiary cohorts, while the 2025–2026 data relates to the current fourth cohort.

These figures demonstrate the breadth of the Agency’s work. But the real value of youth development cannot be understood through numbers alone.

We must also ask whether young people are gaining relevant skills, whether entrepreneurs are receiving appropriate support, whether opportunities are



becoming more accessible and whether interventions are responding to the needs of the communities they are intended to serve.

The same principle must guide the NYDA–MCSA partnership.

We should be able to identify the activities undertaken, the young people and communities reached, the needs addressed and the lessons learned. Clear responsibilities, realistic timelines and appropriate monitoring will help both institutions assess progress and determine where improvements are needed.

The partnership must also remain inclusive and accessible to young people from diverse backgrounds, while respecting the respective mandates of the NYDA and the MCSA.

When institutions coordinate effectively, they can strengthen access to services, reduce fragmentation and create more meaningful opportunities for young people to participate in community development.

That is the purpose of collaboration: to bring complementary strengths together around a shared objective and remain accountable for the work that follows.

SLIDE 20: CLOSING - RESPONSIBLE GRACE IN MOTION

As I conclude, I return to the theme of this conference: “Responsible Grace in Motion: Relocated, Repositioned, Ready for the Other Side.”

Moving forward requires more than the desire for change. It requires preparation, participation and a willingness to take responsibility for the contribution each of us can make.

To the young people gathered here, I encourage you to take an active interest in your own development. Seek information about available opportunities. Build your skills. Explore entrepreneurship and employment pathways. Participate in your communities and use your leadership to contribute to positive change.

To the leadership of the MCSA and the Wesley Guild, the NYDA recognises the importance of working with institutions that are connected to communities and committed to the development of young people.

Our partnership provides a framework for taking this work forward. The next step is to identify priorities, clarify responsibilities and develop practical interventions that can be implemented, monitored and assessed.



Let us ensure that young people are not merely invited into conversations about their future, but are supported to help shape that future.

And let us ensure that the values we speak about are reflected in how we lead, how we serve and how we respond to the needs of others.

Responsible grace must be visible in action: in the opportunities we help create, the communities we strengthen and the young people we support to contribute to South Africa's future.

Thank you. I look forward to our discussion and to hearing from you about the challenges facing young people in your communities, the opportunities you see and the role this partnership can play.

But before I take a seat, through you Programme Director, I would like to open the floor to the youth.

What are the most pressing challenges facing young people in your communities? Where do you see opportunities for the Wesley Guild and the NYDA to work together? And what would meaningful youth participation look like in practice?