



SPEAKING NOTES FOR EXECUTIVE CHAIRPERSON DR SUNSHINE MYENDE

NYP 2030 MID TERM EVALUATION REPORT LAUNCH

**GOODWILL MESSAGE
PRETORIA, GAUTENG**

02 OCTOBER 2026

**SPEAKING NOTES BY THE EXECUTIVE CHAIRPERSON OF THE NYDA ON THE
OCCASION OF THE NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY 2030 MID TERM EVALUATION
REPORT LAUNCH – *Goodwill Message* | ±10 minutes**

02 October 2026

*Programme Directors,
Honourable Minister and Deputy Minister,
Representatives of the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities,
Representatives of the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation,
Our partners from the United Nations Population Fund,
Colleagues from government,
Representatives of civil society, youth formations and organisations,
Distinguished guests,*

Good morning.

It is a privilege to join you at the launch of the Mid-Term Evaluation Report of the National Youth Policy 2020–2030. We wish to congratulate the Department and all stakeholders who contributed to this important process.

For the National Youth Development Agency, this evaluation is an opportunity to reflect not only on the progress made, but also on what must change to ensure that our commitments to young people translate into meaningful outcomes.

The evaluation affirms that the National Youth Policy remains relevant to the priorities and circumstances of young people. However, implementation has been uneven. Coordination across spheres of government remains inconsistent; monitoring and reporting are fragmented; and programmes have not reached all young people equally. These are not merely administrative concerns. They affect whether a young person can access an opportunity, whether support reaches a community, and whether public resources translate into meaningful change.

For the NYDA, one of the report's most important findings concerns the place of young people in decisions that shape their lives. In the evaluation survey, responses on whether young people felt included in decision-making were almost evenly divided: 35.3% said yes, 35.2% said no, and 29.5% sometimes. The message is



clear: participation must mean more than being invited into a room or asked to endorse decisions already made.

Young people must be involved early enough to shape priorities, contribute to programme design, and help assess whether interventions are working. They must be recognised as partners in development, not only as beneficiaries. This principle should guide our participation platforms and the NYDA's Youth Mainstreaming Framework for Youth-Responsive Planning, Budgeting, Monitoring, Evaluation and Auditing.

The evaluation also reminds us that young people do not experience policy in a homogenous manner. A young woman in a rural village, a differently abled young person, an LGBTQIA+ young person, or a young person in a township may face different barriers to services, opportunities and support. Those differences must be reflected in how we plan and deliver youth development.

For young women, gender-based violence and femicide cannot be treated as separate from youth development. Safety, dignity and the freedom to participate fully in society are fundamental to a young person's ability to learn, work, build a livelihood and lead. Our response must be attentive to the circumstances of young women, especially in rural areas and townships, and connect prevention with accessible support and services.

Digital access is equally increasingly tied to education, information, employment and enterprise. Connectivity cannot remain an advantage determined by where a young person happens to live. Expanding reliable network infrastructure, including in rural communities, must form part of ensuring that young people can participate in a changing economy and society.

The findings of this evaluation speak directly to the work the NYDA is already advancing. Through our Disability Inclusion Strategy, we are strengthening our focus on ensuring that young persons with disabilities are not excluded from youth development opportunities. Our Rural Youth Development Strategy responds to the need for more targeted interventions in communities where access remains limited.

We are also working with partners to address the digital divide, including through the connectivity initiative at the Ongoye Computer Laboratory. In addition, the commencement of National Youth Service Phase V, with 100,000 paid service opportunities, provides young people with opportunities to gain practical experience while contributing to their communities. These initiatives reflect important areas of the evaluation, but they also remind us that our responsibility is to ensure that such interventions are coordinated, accessible and measured by their outcomes.



We therefore welcome the handover of this evaluation report to the NYDA for implementation. We recognise it as an important instrument for strengthening our collective response to the challenges identified and for guiding the work that lies ahead. The NYDA stands ready to work with the Department, all spheres of government, our development partners and youth formations to advance the report's recommendations and address the gaps in implementation.

Our Integrated Youth Development Strategy for 2026–2029 will be central to this effort. While the National Youth Policy provides the overarching direction for youth development, the IYDS translates that direction into coordinated priorities, institutional responsibilities and measurable interventions. As the draft Strategy remains open for public comment, we encourage young people and stakeholders to contribute to shaping it. Their voices must inform not only the policies we develop, but also the programmes we implement and the outcomes for which we hold ourselves accountable.

As we move into the remaining years of the National Youth Policy, our task is to strengthen the connection between policy and implementation, between participation and influence, and between public investment and outcomes.

The measure of this work will not be the number of meetings held or documents adopted. It will be whether young people experience a difference in their lives, in their communities and in the opportunities available to them.

The NYDA remains committed to working with government, young people and our partners to advance that purpose.

I thank you.