



SPEAKING NOTES FOR EXECUTIVE CHAIRPERSON
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SAAPAM CONFERENCE
DURBAN, KZN

*“Growth and Sustainability through Improved
Governance: Reimagining Institutions, Leadership and
Development in a Changing World.”*

27 SEPTEMBER 2026



SPEAKING NOTES BY THE EXECUTIVE

CHAIRPERSON OF THE NYDA ON THE OCCASION OF SAAPAM

CONFERENCE – *Panel Participation* | ±10 minutes

27 September 2026

QUESTION 1

Is the NYDA exploring partnerships along the BRICS corridor to give young South African women entrepreneurs access to digital commerce platforms, fintech training and cross-border market linkages that could transform their enterprises from survivalist to scalable?

Thank you, Chair.

Yes, we are exploring this direction, but our interest is not simply in creating international connections. The real question is whether those partnerships can create a practical pathway for a young woman to move from having an entrepreneurial idea, to building a viable enterprise, accessing the skills and technology she needs, reaching markets and, where the conditions allow, growing into larger value chains.

Our engagement with China provides one example. The NYDA's partnership with the Belt and Road Initiative General Chamber of Commerce for Southern Africa creates areas of cooperation around youth entrepreneurship and innovation, market access, business matching, technology transfer, the digital economy, education and skills development. It also creates scope for youth enterprises to explore cross-border business and international markets.

But we have to be deliberate about what happens beyond the partnership itself. If we are talking about digital commerce, young women need the digital capabilities to use those platforms effectively. If we are talking about fintech, they need the financial and business knowledge to use those tools productively. And if we are talking about international markets, they need an understanding of the commercial, regulatory and networking requirements that come with entering those markets.

This is also where inclusion becomes important. We cannot create international opportunities that are accessible mainly to young women who are already connected, urban-based and economically established. Our approach has to consider young women in rural and township communities, women with disabilities, LGBTQIA+ women and others who face barriers to technology, infrastructure, finance and networks.

So, for us, the opportunity presented by BRICS cooperation is ultimately about connecting entrepreneurship, skills, technology and market access in a way that produces a measurable progression in the lives of young women. The objective is



not simply participation in an international programme, but stronger enterprises, greater economic participation and, where possible, sustainable employment.

QUESTION 2

What governance mechanisms has the NYDA put in place to ensure that its women-focused youth development programmes are institutionally embedded, outcomes-measured rather than output-counted, and aligned to the capacity-building priorities of provincial departments of Cooperative Governance?

Thank you, Chair.

For us, institutionalisation means that youth development, including the advancement of young women, cannot sit outside the mainstream systems of government. The Youth Mainstreaming Framework for Youth-Responsive Planning, Budgeting, Monitoring, Evaluation and Auditing provides an important basis for this approach. It calls for youth responsiveness to be integrated across the full public policy cycle - from planning and budgeting through to monitoring, evaluation and auditing.

The important shift is from asking only what was delivered to asking what changed as a result. The framework calls for measurable outcomes, youth-sensitive indicators and targets, disaggregated youth data, expenditure reviews and assessment of whether interventions are actually producing the intended outcomes and impact. It also provides for learning and adjustment where the evidence shows that an intervention is not achieving what it was designed to achieve.

That is particularly relevant to women. We should not only know how many young people participated in a programme; we should be able to understand who benefited, including young women, where they are located, what barriers they experienced and whether the intervention improved their access to economic opportunities and participation. The framework explicitly recognises the need to disaggregate youth data by factors including gender, disability and geographic location.

The framework also makes an important point about budgeting: youth-responsive budgeting is not about creating separate budgets for young people. It is about ensuring that mainstream budgets are planned, implemented, monitored and audited in a way that responds to young people's needs, while tracking the implementation and impact of those allocations.

For provincial and local government, this means youth development has to be understood as a cross-cutting governance responsibility. The framework envisages youth-responsive planning and programmes across national, provincial and local levels, with stronger institutional accountability to young people as users of public services.

So the governance mechanism is ultimately the mainstreaming itself: putting youth considerations into the systems through which government plans, allocates



resources, measures performance and accounts for results. That creates a stronger basis for institutions, including provincial Cooperative Governance structures, to build their capacity around evidence, coordination and measurable youth outcomes rather than isolated programme outputs.