

MEDIA STATEMENT

Issued by the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities
Attention: Journalists and News Editors
Pretoria, 06 June 2024

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THE GOVERNMENT ROLL OUT THE 2024 YOUTH MONTH BY COMMITTING TO ACCELERATION OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH EMPOWERMENT AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT.

PRETORIA: The government commemorates the 48th anniversary of Youth Month since the Soweto and other related uprisings by Actively Embracing the Socio-Economic Gains of Democracy. The 2024 Youth Month comes during a season where South Africans are also celebrating 30 years of freedom and democracy.

With government commitment and determination to prioritise youth development and empowerment, the development of the National Youth Policy, which emphasises the key pillars such as *quality education, skills and development, economic transformation, entrepreneurship and job creation, physical and mental health promotion; social cohesion and nation building* remains a framework to address and accelerate positive youth development.

South Africa is a developing country with a population of 62 million where a majority of its population is young and below the age of 34. What this translates to is that the youth population in South Africa is almost a third of the population, this includes 9.04 million males and 8.80 million females.

“A majority of young people in South Africa are confronted with the government’s triple challenges (**poverty, unemployment, and inequality, as well as corruption**), with unemployment being a weighty burden facing the country’s youth, with adolescent girls and young women facing far more challenges”. said Minister Dlamini Zuma.

The Presidential Youth Employment Initiative has identified several priority interventions to accelerate youth pathways into the economy including the establishment of a National Pathway Management Network, to help with the delivery of agile workforce development, support for youth self-employment and enterprise in the township and rural economy, the strengthening of workplace experience, and the National Youth Service programme.

“Providing young people with access to opportunities is at the core of the National Youth Development Agency’s mandate. It is important for us to ensure that our youth know what opportunities are available to them to transform their lives, their communities and ultimately the country and it is for this reason that the agency has directed the commemoration of Youth Day around careers and opportunities expo,” said Waseem Carrim, NYDA Chief Executive Officer.

As part of government efforts to address youth unemployment, over 100,000 young South Africans between the age of 15–34 years are placed in paid internships, apprenticeships, mentorship and entrepreneurship across the country through the Youth Employment Services (YES) programme.

In response to a call by the Presidential Youth Employment Initiative to collaborate with various stakeholders. The Government recently launched the South African National Service Institute in partnership with the National Defence Force an initiative aimed at addressing skills shortages in Maritime, the Ocean Economy; Engineering, Construction; and Skills of the future which includes Artificial intelligence as well as Defence and security.

In honour of the youth of 2024 for playing an active role in ushering in the 7th democratic government. The youth of today has carried the baton forward with its exceptional contributions in various sectors of society, to accrue the gains of 30 years of our freedom and democracy that we all enjoy today.

The enormous participation of young people in the peaceful 2024 national and provincial elections which ushered in the 7th democratic administration signals their commitment to protect the country’s hard-earned freedom and the legacy of those who came before them

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