

**SPEECH AT THE NCOP MINISTERIAL SESSION ON YOUTH AND
POVERTY**

BY

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AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

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Deputy Chairperson

Chairperson of the NCOP

House Chairperson

Chief Whip

Premiers

Ministers Present

Honourable Members

Ladies and Gentlemen

Today's debate comes at a critical time in our history as a country and globally, in which the disruptions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic has laid bare the inequality that exist in our country and globally. The pandemic has also deepened the divide between the rich and the poor. It has worsened the Vulnerabilities in our societies.

The loss of jobs and incomes as a result of this pandemic will have a burden on our young people and their capacity to find employment. We there require innovative ways in which we can address youth unemployment.

In a few weeks, the United Nations will hold a Food Systems Summit. The Summit is expected to launch bold new actions to deliver progress on all Sustainable Development Goals, each of which relies to some degree on healthier, more sustainable and equitable food systems. As a country we have held about 12 dialogues in preparation of this Summit, one of which focused on the role of youth in building and strengthening food systems.

Africa has the youngest population in the world with more than 400 million young people aged between the ages of 15 to 35 years, with 77% being unemployed youth. South Africa's population is approximately 60 million with 58% being youth, 46% of which are unemployed. Such a youthful population calls for an increase of investment in economic and social development factors, in order to improve the development index of our nations.

YOUTH PROGRAMMES IN DALRRD

Madam Deputy Chairperson of the NCOP, young people form a base of our human capital in the agriculture and agri-business sector. These young professionals are Scientists, Extension and Advisory Services, Agriculture Economists, Agro dealers, Contractors, Veterinary Doctors and Food technologists.

A new cohort of the young people are increasingly joining the ranks of farmers and agribusiness enterprises. They may not be in high numbers yet, but they form a building block of new food producers of our country.

Deputy Chairperson I have highlighted the variety of careers in order to highlight the pathways in which young people participate in the Sector.

The debate today however seeks to understand what we have done and what will we do as the government to address youth unemployment in our country.

Chairperson, in our engagement with young people, they have articulated the following are challenges they face in the Agricultural sector: Access to land; Finance; Markets; Farm Infrastructure; Information and Advisory Services; Technology and Machinery.

The DALRRD is actively playing its role in the reduction of poverty and unemployment by broadening opportunities that includes young people through economic inclusion, education and skills as well as other specific redress measures. Some initiatives to tackle these challenges amongst others include:

- Review of the Beneficiary Selection and Land Allocation Policy which advocates that 40% allocation to young people. Out of 151 478 hectares allocated in the past 2 years, 67 196 (44%) are allocated to women, 38 163 (25%) are allocated to young people.
- Through the Presidential Employment Stimulus (PESI) we assisted 32 999 young people 18 275 being young women.
- 2450 subsistence farmers were supported to deal with challenges posed by covid-19 pandemic during lockdowns 2020/21 lockdowns
- Employment of Extension and Advisory Professionals – 10 000 officers to be employed in the next three years to provide advisory and extension services to farmers in the various districts.

In building Human Capital a number of initiatives are being implemented including:

- **Agricultural Graduate Placement Programme** – Through CASP, a budget is ring fenced for placement of 1000 graduates in farms/enterprises for a period of 2 years for entrepreneurial development and experiential learning by provincial departments and participate in the sector as agripreneurs.
- **Career Awareness Programme** - focusing on the promotion of careers in agriculture as livelihoods of choice. To date 480 learners have been supported, 131 completed their qualifications in various fields within the sector which 57 still furthering their studies.
- **External Bursary Scheme** - 1 905 bursaries were awarded to young students, 1010 completed their qualifications and are contributing to the economy of the country as part of the labour force, as Scientists, Economists, Veterinarians, Food Technologists, Candidate Engineers etc. 231 are employed by DALRRD, 7 are employed by other National Government Departments, 105 are employed by provincial Departments of Agriculture and 232 are employed by private sector and parastatals
- **Graduates Internship Placement Programme** - 3891 unemployed graduates were placed in various national (236) and provincial government (182) departments as well as in the private sector (367) participated in the programme since its inception.
- **The National Rural Youth Services Corps (NARYSEC) programme** - placing greater emphasis on recruiting and skilling youth for various job opportunities within and outside government.

As part of DDM programme, 572 youth from Limpopo, KZN and Eastern Cape trained in Agriculture by the Agriculture Research Council (ARC) in commodities such as: Maize, Poultry, Dairy, Piggery, Beef and Vegetable production and agribusiness. 78,5 hectares of land made available by various traditional councils to allow the young people to carry out agricultural activities. 188 young people undergoing Public Safety and Traffic Management training as part of the Integrated Rural Safety Plan in Mpumalanga and the Free State respectively. The intention is for the youth to be absorbed by their local municipalities. 93 young people from Eastern Cape, Gauteng, Northern Cape and Western Cape currently undergoing training with Clicks Pharmacy Group and will be absorbed by the company. As part of the District Development Model (DDM) 98 young people (73 EC and 25 KZN) receiving training in Environmental Waste Management Qualification.

I Thank You