

**Address by the Deputy Minister of Higher Education and  
Training of the Republic of South Africa, Mr Buti  
Manamela, to the African Forum on Youth Skills and  
Enterprises in the Digital Age**

**Tunis, Tunisia**

**18 April 2018**

His Excellency, Mr Faouzi Abderrahmane, Minister of Vocational  
Training and Employment of Tunisia,  
Ministers and Deputy Ministers from  
Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Kenya, Niger  
and Sudan.

Ambassador Sahbi KHALFALLAH- Ambassador of Republic of  
Tunisia to the African Union.

Prof Sarah Anyang Agbor, Commissioner, Human Resources  
Science and Technology, African Union Commission;

Mr Shem Okore Boda of ADEA

Ambassadors of member states;

Distinguished International and local delegates;

Program Director;

Ladies and gentleman.

Dumelang, Sanibonani, Good Morning, Bonjour, Sabalheri, Bom  
Dia, Salaam

It gives me great pleasure to address you today at the start of this important **‘African Forum on Youth Skills and Enterprises in the Digital Age’**. It is significant that we hold this important forum in Tunisia, our member state that has just been honoured as the ‘Most Innovative Economy in Africa’ and overall 43<sup>rd</sup> in the World according to the 2018 Bloomberg Innovation Index. I want to congratulate the Government of Tunisia on this achievement.

Africa is moving rapidly into the World Innovation Scene. Africa is no more the place for handouts, but a continent that is taking its rightful place in the global market. We are well aware that although our continent’s economies are expanding and creating substantial wealth over the last two decades, Africa has also the fastest growth in the youth population in the world.

This youth population growth places significant emphasis on the continent's approaches to skills development and youth employment.

South Africa has much to learn and to contribute to the social and economic development of our continent, and in particular to Agenda 2063. In South Africa, we see Technical and Vocational Education and Training as critical to the advancement of skills development, innovation and youth employment. We are firstly here to learn from our brothers and sisters in Africa. But we also want to share what we are doing. Allow me to highlight a few innovative developments.

We are focussing on skills development and have declared 'The decade of the Artisan (2014 – 2024)' where we encourage and promote youth development in the trades, including engineering, services and business studies.

In the last financial year our Institute for the National Development of Learnerships, Employment Skills and Labour Assessments (INDLELA) qualified 21,188 new artisans. In this financial year a further 22, 188 new artisans will qualify.

In order to give skills development its rightful place in social value, we are focusing on career advice and guidance. Our Khetha Career Development Service provides career development services for all through a free helpline, radio programmes, training and support, to name a few. We have a free online portal called the National Career Advice Portal (NCAP) that introduce youth to all 1437 registered occupations in South Africa. We would like to share this portal structure and content with other countries interested to run such a portal in their country.

In collaboration with industry, we have introduced new innovative curriculum and qualifications called the National Occupational Qualifications where we emphasise holistic and integrated development that includes theory, practice and work experience.

This is closely linked to projects such as Centres of Specialisation, where we identified 26 colleges in 13 priority trades; and in collaboration with industry build infrastructure and capacity in these colleges to deliver highly innovative and technological advanced teaching and learning.

This is aligned to the introduction of a dual-system in collaboration with GIZ and other industry partners. Lastly we have a huge drive towards lecturer, facilitator and mentor development and training.

In today's learning environment we cannot teach and learn without technology. In 2004 we devised a policy on eLearning that have 6 strategic objectives including infrastructure development, content development and sharing, teacher development, technical and pedagogical support, research and community involvement. We have initiated a connectivity initiative where we are connecting all TVET Colleges' campuses to uncapped broadband connectivity for administration, teaching, learning and assessment.

This will be integrated into eAdministration, eLearning and Lecturer development across the country.

We are furthermore initiating a National Open Learning System where everyone will have free access to high quality self-directed learning materials and opportunities to obtain recognised qualifications. We are progressively sourcing and developing interactive learning materials and open textbooks in all 13 trades mentioned above.

I hope that this initiative will become an Africa-wide asset for quality TVET teaching and learning materials. We are giving open learning its rightful place in South Africa and prioritise the application of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in addressing issues of access, equity, redress and equality through open learning.

We are living in a time where our youth are exposed to more innovation, new high level skills and technology advancements than ever before. It is unfortunately the same world where there are not enough places in post-school education and training to absorb all the prospective students and where students exiting the system are not assured of finding a place of work.

I hope that in this forum we will be able to find some answers to the question: “Are we preparing young people for the world that they are living in and the future that we don’t know?”

We need to address these challenges urgently and I hope that this forum will provide a much needed injection of creativity to help governments and development partners in education and training to address these critical issues. We have to share common strategies, appropriate models and innovative approaches to teaching, learning and skills development.

I wish you a successful forum and hope that we are able to come forward with constructive and implementable ideas that will help ensure we keep our Continent moving forward rapidly.

I thank you