

## **REMARKS BY DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE PRESIDENCY KENNETH MOROLONG**

### **Media briefing on the Presidential Youth Employment Intervention**

**28 August 2023**

Members of the media

Every year, about a million young people leave secondary school in South Africa – of these approximately 30% enter post-schooling education, another 10% find work, while 60% remain outside of employment, education or training.

We know that those young people who do manage to access opportunities tend to zig-zag on broken pathways, falling in and out of education and short-term work making it difficult for them to gain a foothold in the economy.

This situation calls for bold and urgent action.

It is for this reason that in his 2020 State of Nation Address, the President launched the Presidential Youth Employment Intervention (PYEI) as a direct response to the youth unemployment crisis.

The PYEI is a multi-stakeholder partnership that accelerates efforts to transition young people from learning to earning.

It is designed around young people and places strong emphasis on implementing what we know is effective in enabling these transitions.

This includes the following:

**pathway management**, which acknowledges that different groups of young people face very different barriers to productive earning and therefore require different types of support;

**creating a direct link between skills development and demand in economy** to unlock earning opportunities in growing sectors;

**building mechanisms that enable local economies** and support young people's enterprises and self-employment and;

providing young people with **paid community service** and other temporary earning opportunities to gain experience, build their agency and contribute to their communities.

The PYEI recognises that the challenge before us cannot be addressed through isolated initiatives.

It brings together the strengths of numerous government institutions and social partners to open more pathways to earning for young people.

The Presidency's Project Management Office (PMO) coordinates the intervention and provides strategic direction while key national departments and entities lead the implementation together with a diverse set of partners.

The desired impact is to contribute to a South Africa where **young people are actively participating in the economy with greater dignity and a sense of agency over their contribution to society.**

The PYEI has made significant progress to date with achieving this objective.

The National Pathway Management Network, a network of networks that aggregates opportunities into a single place and provides active support to young people to navigate pathways into the economy, **now reaches more than 4 million young people.**

Many of the young people who are joining the network through sayouth.mobi, face exclusion in the labour market.

The majority are young black women, a cohort we know experiences extensive barriers to accessing earning opportunities in the economy and requires targeted support.

Moreover, 73% of young people who responded to the question report that they attended poorer resourced quintile 1 to 3 schools and 65% report that they live in households where at least one member receives a social grant.

By connecting the sayouth.mobi platform to other platforms in the network such as the Department of Employment and Labour's Employment Services South Africa (ESSA), JOBJACK and the National Youth Development Agency's ERP platform, the National Pathway Management Network is providing young people with access to a wide range of opportunities across all partners.

Through this network, young people have been supported to **access just over 1 million earning opportunities since the inception of the PYEI**. This includes opportunities delivered through the Presidential Employment Stimulus, the revitalised National Youth Service and private sector efforts such as the Youth Employment Service.

Young people such as Timothy who first joined the sayouth.mobi as a school assistant in the successful Department of Basic Education Employment Initiative programme have been able to find other opportunities on the network.

After the DBE programme ended, Timothy discovered an opportunity to make his own money on SA Youth, by selling goods using a digital app called [Qwili](#) and quickly becoming a top earner.

As we come to the end of Women's Month, it is also critical to highlight how the PYEI is responding to the vulnerability young women continue to face.

The recent release of quarter 2 results of the Quarterly Labour Force Survey paint a grim picture of the state of women in the labour market.

Women are less likely to participate labour force compared men and those that do, face higher unemployment rates.

Of the young women aged 15-24 years, 36% are NEET compared to only 32.4% for young men.

The PYEI counters these effects by linking young women to programmes in the partnership such as the Basic Package of Support and the revitalised National Youth Service that provide targeted support and break down persistent barriers.

The Basic Package of Support reaches out to young people who are Not in Employment, Education, or Training (NEET) and offers face-to-face coaching to help them solve for the multiple challenges that are keeping them trapped in the NEET status.

We know that young women are especially vulnerable to this as they are more likely to live in income poor households and to carry a heavier burden of care in the household.

This is the case for Michaela, a 21-year-old young woman from Atlantis, who joined the Basic Package of Support in June 2022.

Michaela's primary goal was to pursue her studies, but she also felt a responsibility to care for and financially support her grandmother.

She initiated a job hunt and achieved success. After securing employment, her Basic Package of Support coach encouraged her to pursue broader ambitions for higher education.

Michaela applied for a Foundation Phase teaching course and was unfortunately not accepted.

She persevered, having developed a Plan B with her coach and is now pursuing her studies in Human Resource Management.

As these results highlight, a substantial amount of energy has gone into bringing young people into the National Pathway Management Network, where they are supported to access learning to earning opportunities.

With this foundation in place, the PYEI is now placing greater emphasis on transitions into sustainable earning opportunities.

This involves both unlocking demand in priority growth sectors as well as developing effective mechanisms to track young people's movements through the labour market.

In addition, we are focusing our attention on two critical priorities for the remainder of the year to ensure the sustainability of the PYEI.

Our first priority is to secure funding for the PYEI over the medium term.

Our second is to review and enhance the institutional arrangements to continue to embed this intervention in government and enable effective partnerships with the non-state sector.

This whole of society approach to delivery is central to the PYEI partnership and **it is working.**

It must be prioritised for funding to scale up its efforts and ensure its continuity over long term.

The results and stories from young people demonstrate that by creating pathways to the opportunities, the PYEI is restoring young people's hope and dignity.

Thank you