

Letsema and Kuyasa Graduation Speech 2019

Distinguished Guests, our graduands, media, Ladies and Gentlemen, all protocol observed.

It gives me great pleasure to be here on a joyous and memorable occasion.

Graduation ceremonies are a major highlight on the BANKSETA calendar of events. Even more so, to address graduates from the event. BANKSETA has a history in the development of young minds in leadership which will hopefully result in the improvement of the lives of ordinary South Africans. The graduation ceremony evokes a mixed bag of emotions. Some of you might be feeling excited, happy, anxious and some may even have tears in their eyes, which are in this case tears of joy.

The Letsema and Kuyasa Learnership programmes are part of the banking sector's commitment to the Financial Service Charter and the National Skills Development Strategy. Completion of the programmes equip you, the learners with a formal NQF Level-5 and NQF Level-6 qualification and practical experience in the banking sector. These two programmes have been successful and have contributed to skills development amongst the youth in South Africa.

This year we are celebrating the success of 574 graduates across the country. Please look at person next to you and say well done because everyone that is within this room, made a contribution to the success we are experiencing today. In the 10 graduation ceremonies of 2019, of the 574 graduates, 60 % are women **(Malibongwe!)**.

The BANKSETA delivers high quality, relevant skills programmes that respond to national social and economic priorities. These imperatives include a set of ethics and values that encourage and promote our constitutional values, as well as a willingness to support empowerment and enrichment programmes. We are putting systems in place to ensure cooperation and alignment with all educators, around the same objectives, which, is to educate and upskill, so that our graduates secure decent jobs or they become excellent entrepreneurs.

It is BANKSETA belief that sufficient levels of skills can only be achieved by the enhancement of opportunities for skills development through the integration of higher education, training and skills development by turning our focus to a single post-school education landscape geared towards achieving national human resource needs. The fragmented higher education and skills development sectors have been pointed out as one of the causes for the failure to raise the skills base towards meeting national needs. The National Skills

Development Strategy (NSDS III) and the new integrated post-school educational landscape provides opportunities to clearly identify and address skills needs in the short, medium and long term, for different labour market segments and industries, and for a wide range of individuals from new entrants to those facing retrenchment or retirement. The NSDS III will have its most profound impact on the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs).

In order to enhance the effectiveness of the skills development system, the DHET has introduced a number of processes such as reducing the scope of SETAs; to align SETA structures behind national mandates and economic sectors; to align Sector Skills Plans with national and sectoral objectives; build a national information management system containing data on the entire post-school system and revitalising the public Further Education and Training College system.

Your graduation ceremony this morning takes place at a particularly challenging time in the history of our democracy. You graduate at a time when our country is at a crossroads. You graduate at a time when our nation is engulfed with anger, turbulence, and racial polarisation. You graduate at a time when the foundations and pillars of our constitutional democracy are being challenged and tested. We are witnessing extraordinary events unfolding in front of our own eyes. Much is at stake.

I wish to extend a special, warm and heartfelt congratulations to those graduands who are the first in their family to earn a qualification as that is one of the paths that will lead to a better future for all concerned. No one can take education away from you...I know too from personal experience what a proud and special moment this is for all of you.

To the parents, guardians, siblings, friends and loved ones, I wish to extend our deep appreciation for the unstinting support, encouragement and constant reassurance you have given to the graduands over the last 12 months. You were always there to cheer them on, you were there to lift them when they lost hope and, above all, you were there to love them when they needed you most. This graduation is a fitting tribute to all that you have done for Learners. Congratulations!

I'm pleased to announce that the current crop of recruitment we have went deep in the rural areas of our country. Our goal is to ensure that the quality of life changing education is accessible and affordable to all young people in our country irrespective of their financial position and location.

Let me conclude with the inspiring words of from Steve Jobs which I hope will guide you graduates:

“Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life. Don't let the noise of others' opinions drown out your own inner voice. And most importantly, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition.”

Congratulations!