



**MINISTER IN THE PRESIDENCY: WOMEN, YOUTH AND PERSONS WITH
DISABILITIES
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**LAUNCH OF YOUTH MONTH KEYNOTE ADDRESS
BY HONOURABLE MINISTER IN THE PRESIDENCY FOR WOMEN,
YOUTH AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES,
MS MAITE NKOANA-MASHABANE**

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Minister of Sport, Arts and Culture, Nathi Mthethwa
Deputy Minister in the Presidency, Women, Youth and Persons
with Disabilities, Professor Hlengiwe Mkhize,
Deputy Minister of Sport, Arts and Culture, Nocawe Mafu
Director-General of Department of Women, Youth and Persons
with Disabilities, Advocate Mikateko Joyce Maluleke
CEO of NYDA, Waseem Carrim
Members of the Media
Distinguished Guests
Young people of this country

Today, I am honoured to be standing in front of you as we launch the month-long programme in celebration of Youth of this country. The month of June is dedicated to the youth of 1976 who bravely stood up against the injustices of the apartheid government.

The youth of 1976 laid down their lives when they rightfully fought for freedom and the right to equal education.

The year 2021 marks the 45 years since the 1976 student uprising in Soweto.

As we gather here today we must reflect on the past 45 years and look at the role of young people in shaping South Africa into

the vibrant democracy it is today. I remember a time when it was very difficult for youth to share ideas, communicate, mobilise and rally behind ideas, and to really connect. Today, youth are able to connect globally, share ideas, debate, and harness resources to create the future they want.

This year marks the 150th anniversary of the birth of Mme Charlotte Mannya Maxeke.

Government of South Africa declared 2021 the Year of Charlotte Mannya Maxeke to memorialise this trailblazer and struggle icon. Minister Nathi Mthethwa was with me when we launched this important year on 30 April 2021.

We are proud as a country of this historical significance because mme Charlotte Maxeke's legacy lives on as a major contributor to the emancipation of women in South Africa.

uMama Charlotte Mannya Maxeke will become the second woman to be memorialized and honoured in this way since 2018 when struggle icon Albertina Sisulu was honoured.

This, the 150th year since the birthday of uMama Charlotte Mannya Maxeke is an important year for South Africa as we recognise women of courage and fortitude who pursued the

same cause as struggle icons like Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu and Oliver Tambo, to name but a few. Charlotte Mannya Maxeke made an indelible impact on many areas, including education, faith and politics.

Indeed, mme Charlotte Mannya Maxeke stands out as one of the leaders of the liberation struggle who fought for women empowerment in the areas of education, religion, politics, community development and upliftment.

We therefore want to use Youth Month, to not only celebrate this struggle stalwart but to reignite the spirit of women empowerment, achievements, and success.

Youth Month 2021 takes place while the country is battling with the global pandemic, COVID-19 which has impacted many lives.

Despite the looming third wave, we remain positive and forge ahead to ensure that South Africa's economy recovers.

As we recover, we also take note of the women, youth and persons with disabilities and the impact of COVID-19 on them.

We are grappling with issues of gender-based violence and femicide, mental health, the rate of high unemployment, and

substance and alcohol abuse, often brought about by societal triggers, depression and a host of external factors.

As government we continue to seek solutions to these issues and take measures that will ensure that women, youth, and persons with disabilities can thrive and build the South Africa we want.

This year, we will be celebrating Youth Month under the theme – The ***Year of Charlotte Mannya Maxeke: Growing youth employment for an inclusive and transformed society.***

Despite the many challenges faced by the youth, during this month we want to focus on the positivity.

We want to take stock of the success stories of the young people of this country. We want to celebrate their achievements.

Most importantly, we want to recommit ourselves to working together in building an inclusive and transformed society.

We call on society to play your part in ensuring opportunities for youth, to ensure an inclusive and transformed society. We cannot ignore our youth dividend if we are to see society progress.

All of us must play our part in creating an inclusive society by allowing engagements, improving the mental health of youth and persons with disabilities, and increasing access to opportunities for the youth and economic gains by all.

Government recognises the power and ability of the youth. We therefore continue to invest in youth development programmes through agencies such as the National Youth Development Agency to bring positive changes to the lives of the young people of our country.

The NYDA recognises challenges faced by the youth better and recognises the potential that the young people possess. It is for this reason that the agency continues to implement programmes that brings change in the lives of our youth.

Young people hold the key to transforming our economy, boosting growth, and fostering social cohesion, creativity, and innovation.

The Presidency working with the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities continues to work across

government and private and social partners to coordinate and drive an integrated plan to create two million new jobs for young people during the next decade, over and above average job growth.

In addition, through the National Youth Policy 2020-2030, we want to ensure that all sectors of society implement inclusive youth interventions which will ultimately promote the constitutional rights of all youth, including young women, youth with disabilities, young men, LGBTQIA+ and youth in rural areas.

It is our aim to transform society and build a country filled with opportunities for the youth.

Economic freedom is indeed critical to afford women, youth, and persons with disabilities to have choices. Choices to create their own employment opportunities and become active participants in the country's economy.

The Presidential Youth Employment Intervention is government's plan to address this challenge. It is designed to effectively transition young people into the labour market, aiming to significantly reduce the high rate of youth unemployment. It is intended to coordinate, enhance, and scale up existing

programmes across government and through close partnerships with the private sector. Bringing together a wide range of partners within and beyond government, it is the largest effort to address youth employment in South Africa's history.

We believe that with the available opportunities, young people can become job-creators and not only become jobseekers.

We need the women, youth, and persons with disabilities to raise their hands up and explore possibilities and opportunities that our country presents.

During this Youth Month, we want to encourage young people to seek entrepreneurial and skills opportunities.

Working together, we can leverage any available opportunity to gain the skills and knowledge that will ultimately create employment opportunities and benefits.

We encourage young women to look up to the struggle stalwarts and emulate the values of the likes of mme Charlotte Mannya Maxeke – a human rights activist whose ambitions led her to become the first Black South African woman to earn a university degree. Mme Charlotte Mannya Maxeke paved the way for all

of us who followed to become leaders and we want to do the same for young girls in our communities

We need more young women to take up spaces, to show up, to become leaders and to break the stereotypes that is assigned to the role of women in our society.

Ladies and gentlemen, as part of today's launch the CEO of the NYDA, Waseem Carrim has outlined the activities which will be embarked on as part of the Youth Month.

Key to those activities is the Presidential Youth Employment Intervention.

We will make use of Youth Month to take stock of the successes of the various government's interventions which seek to afford young people with learning and earning opportunities.

We continue to call upon all sectors of society to join hands with us to realise the objectives of the Presidential Youth Employment Intervention which seek to reduce youth unemployment.

In conclusion, I would like to urge women, youth, and persons with disabilities to rise and change the world. You can transform a crisis into possibilities. You have enormous potential as the youth of our country. Together we can build a better inclusive and transformed society!

Allow me to close with this quote from Mme Charlotte Maxeke delivered at an address at Fort Hare in 1930:

If you definitely and earnestly set out to lift women and children up in social life of the Bantu, you will find the men will benefit, and thus the whole community both white and black. Johannesburg is to my knowledge a great example of endeavor for the uplift of the Bantu woman, but we must pull all our energies into this task if we are to succeed.

I thank you.