

11 May 2018

Minister Pandor's speech at the Human Resources Development Council 2018 Summit, Department of Higher Education and Training, Emperors Palace, Kempton Park

The HRDC Summit is an important meeting that provides a platform for us to reflect on skills and employment creation as well as our advances or failure in this challenging task of more, competent, enabled, absorbed, active, and skilled human resources.

This year you will hear all political leaders refer to former President Nelson Mandela and Mama Albertina Sisulu, two great South Africans who served as living examples of commitment, discipline and sacrifice.

Their lives should give us the courage to vigorously pursue the human resource development objectives that draw us together each year.

We have at least five objectives that form the basis of our interaction.

First, we need to offer practical opportunities for skills development to a very diverse range of young people and adults. This skill set must go well beyond formal education and life skills training. Our partnerships must include and focus on critical literacy and numeracy and include occupational and professional programmes that lead young people into work and entrepreneurship positions and working people into leadership in their organisations and workplaces.

Our summits must provide hope to young people, and must clearly indicate that we know their plight and we have solutions.

Recent statistics on unemployment point to troubling levels of unemployment especially among young people. This summit has to help us move beyond numbers and into concrete programmes. The NDP outlined what South Africa needs to do address poverty, inequality and unemployment. The use of broad-based stakeholder compacts (?) was signalled as a strategic imperative.

So the second task we must embrace is creating innovative partnerships to advance our national goals. I'm really pleased to see a significant presence of partners here and I hope the conclusion of our deliberations will be concrete collaboration and shared programmes for young people.

The NDP set us the following human resource development tasks:

- We must reduce income inequality and discrimination, substantially, by 2030.
- The number of SMMEs and the variety of businesses must be expanded.
- Skilled artisans should be produced in increased numbers especially in scarce skills domains.

All these targets require us to establish partnerships between industry and colleges, between innovation hubs and our universities, colleges and community colleges and strategic use of research to design these partnerships.

Third, the use of research to influence our decisions is critical. We tend to brainstorm responses rather than support our think tanks and universities to investigate possible models for realizing our goals.

I'm really pleased that the modus operandi of the HRDC includes a full programme of commissioned research and integration of research outcomes into programmes they initiate. I believe a significant growth of initiatives is possible.

Fourth, there is an abundance of possible partners in South Africa and globally. We must use them to good effect. In working with the Council I have been encouraged at seeing the competence of non-governmental organisations and of the trainers? in our state owned enterprises. I believe a significant growth in initiatives is possible and believe that as a summit we will be able to report on the advances we have made.

Fifth, and finally, greater efforts should be directed at supporting our TVET colleges and community colleges to become premier trade and occupational skills development institutions. We should build a seamless relationship between the private sector and public institutions and develop successful skills development models through international partnerships. Our department hopes to work with our colleges to develop innovative specialist focus areas in each region in our country. If we succeed in broadening the programme offerings develop quality staff and excellent infrastructure I am convinced we will succeed in the ambitious skills targets of our 2030 strategy.

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