



MINISTERIAL THINK TANK REPORT

PREPARED BY THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE ECONOMIC
COLLECTIVE (NEXEC)





women, youth & persons with disabilities

Department:
Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



Skills for the changing world - Empowering youth
for meaningful economic participation.



SUMMARY

**“YOU ARE TWO STEPS AWAY FROM THE PRESIDENT’S EAR —
DON’T WASTE IT WITH POLITENESS. COME WITH SOLUTIONS.”**

On 2 June 2025, the Minister in the Presidency for Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities convened a high-level Youth Think Tank in Randburg as part of its Youth Month programme. The session brought together youth leaders, creatives, policy practitioners, and sector experts for a focused dialogue on the structural challenges facing young people in South Africa. Designed as a space for strategic input rather than symbolic consultation, the Think Tank encouraged honest, solution-oriented engagement on issues such as gender-based violence, youth unemployment, trauma, and economic exclusion. Participants were invited to contribute not just ideas, but implementable proposals capable of informing national planning. The gathering reflected the Ministry’s intent to deepen collaboration with youth constituencies in shaping practical, long-term interventions.

The Ministry responded with candour, acknowledging the limitations of its core budget while outlining catalytic projects valued at billions of rands, backed by Presidential performance agreements. In turn, participants offered a range of grounded, implementable solutions focused on addressing gender-based violence, youth unemployment, economic exclusion, and systemic fragmentation. Proposals centred on shifting from awareness to accountability, building informed platforms, and leveraging innovation in agriculture, technology, and public procurement. The session was positioned as the beginning of an ongoing engagement process, with further written submissions, individual follow-ups, and policy integration planned. For those who attended, your voices are being translated into action; for those who were not present, this summary reflects the tone and intent of a gathering defined by urgency, honesty, and shared responsibility.

CORE FRAMING

Zimasa “Mooshtaffa” Vabaza

A standout moment early in the Think Tank emerged through a powerful contribution from Zimasa “Mooshtaffa” Vabaza, who introduced what he termed the “Pyramid of Life” framework — a sharp, accessible model for understanding the lived economic reality of South African youth. Mooshtaffa’s framework became a thematic centrepiece of the day’s engagement, laying bare the cascading consequences of joblessness and systemic exclusion.

“At the base of the pyramid is work. Then income. Then lifestyle. At the top is purpose. If the first is broken — if there is no work — the rest collapses.”

In its simplicity, this construct captured the layered crisis facing young people. It resonated widely with the room — not merely as theory, but as truth born of observation, experience, and deep reflection. Participants echoed it repeatedly across interventions, and Ministry officials later remarked on how succinctly it encapsulated the urgency of reform.



Mooshtaffa did not speak in abstraction. His words came from the intersection of lived reality and analytical clarity — grounded in his broader work as a nationally recognised socio-economic commentator, digital educator, and media entrepreneur. A trusted and familiar voice to many in the room, he has made it his mission to translate complex financial, political and economic issues into relatable, data-informed storytelling for young South Africans through his platform, “So Here’s Something Interesting”. What began as bite-sized infographics and reels is now a leading YouTube and podcast series known for its sharp, research-driven insights.

As a multi-award-winning strategist, facilitator, corporate MC, and mentor, Mooshtaffa has worked across boardrooms and communities, becoming a bridge between policy language and everyday understanding. It is from this vantage point — at once technical and empathetic — that he offered a perspective which shaped the day’s proceedings.

He stressed that youth economic exclusion is not simply a matter of funding or education, but of structural architecture: If work is unavailable, no amount of motivation, skills development or “entrepreneurial spirit” can meaningfully anchor young people. The result is predictable: trauma, apathy, addiction, depression, and disenfranchisement — all symptoms of a root cause the system continues to misdiagnose or downplay.

His framing brought moral urgency to the economic discussion and helped situate the Ministry’s catalytic projects within a broader societal context. It also challenged both government and participants to move past platitudes and commit to concrete interventions that fix “the bottom of the pyramid” — work — so that everything else can rise.

In a forum rich with insight, his intervention provided the foundational language through which much of the rest of the conversation was filtered and processed.

THEMATIC AREAS AND CONTRIBUTIONS



Structural Unemployment and Skills

- Participants raised alarm about youth unemployment statistics, questioning the impact of programmes that claim success without measurable outcomes.
- Vocational training and artisan work were highlighted as under-resourced and poorly promoted.
- Emphasis was placed on skills that pay (e.g. plumbing, financial modelling, solar installation), not just degrees.

“Having a degree is nice. But it’s your skills that get you paid.”

“We glamorise degrees but don’t respect artisans.”



Policy Silos and Institutional Disconnects

A recurring frustration was the fragmentation of youth programmes across departments and tiers of government. One participant displayed slides listing over a dozen youth-focused programmes from various departments — yet none were aligned, consolidated, or evaluated for impact.

This was described as a “siloe labyrinth,” where young people are often lost between mandates, unsure of which department to approach for what service. The result is duplication, inefficiency, and a disorienting experience for beneficiaries. One participant quipped: “You need a degree just to navigate the departments that are supposed to help you get a degree.”

There was a strong call for a “one-stop youth architecture” — not just as a digital platform but a streamlined ecosystem with a single, clear point of entry.

Recommendations:

- Build a centralised youth database
- Establish cross-departmental working groups (e.g. DHET x DSBD x DWYPD)
- Track programme effectiveness using impact metrics, not just participation

“You can’t keep calling it work if it doesn’t shift reality. That’s not work — that’s just force.” – Tshepo Lethea

Technology, Access and Platform Equity

Several speakers raised the issue of digital inequity, pointing out that while many young South Africans are digitally literate, they are systematically excluded from monetising their skills.

One participant highlighted how Google and Meta benefit disproportionately from South African user data, yet township entrepreneurs lack even basic training in search engine optimisation (SEO), dropshipping, or paid media management — fields that require no tertiary qualification and can be accessed remotely.

“Even the plumber in the township loses business to a white-owned company that shows up first in a Google search. That’s not merit — that’s structural exclusion.”

The call was for deep, strategic partnerships with platforms like Google, Meta, and TikTok to embed digital commercial training into schools and youth centres — targeting not just graduates, but high school students.



THEMATIC AREAS AND CONTRIBUTIONS



The Crisis of Funding and Budget Architecture

Several participants, including senior advisor to the Ministry, underscored how chronic underfunding of the department has rendered it virtually invisible and operationally constrained. With only R200 million allocated (of which over R120 million is spent on salaries and logistics), the national department lacks the fiscal muscle to respond meaningfully to its vast mandate across youth, women, and persons with disabilities.

Yet, in response to this, participants brought innovative funding strategies to the table. One proposal recommended repurposing R50 million **“youth empowerment funds” available to every Premier**, noting that these are often underutilised. Another suggested leveraging legacy budgets and reclassifying youth employment as a Presidential crisis to unlock emergency funding.

The conversation was marked by urgency and defiance of bureaucratic inertia. One speaker challenged the room: “Don’t tell me why it can’t be done. Tell me why it must.”



Economic Dignity and Employment Pathways

A resounding theme throughout the session was the urgent need to reframe youth development away from passive support and toward meaningful economic participation. Participants voiced frustration that unemployment was consistently framed as an abstract “challenge” rather than a national crisis of dignity, productivity, and identity.

Zimasa Vabaza’s “Pyramid of Life” construct provided the framework: “If there is no work, there is no income, no lifestyle, and no purpose.” This powerful idea was echoed across contributions and helped consolidate the conversation around work as the critical foundation from which everything else must flow.

Others added that entrepreneurship alone is not a silver bullet. Many young people are **“being taught to swim in a pool with no water”** — encouraged to start businesses without infrastructure, markets, or even the basic tools to navigate procurement systems.



Skills, Safety, and Accreditation Bottlenecks

Youth engagement in the artisan trades — plumbing, electrical work, solar installation — was widely endorsed, but participants warned against rushing training programmes that do not ensure safety or professional accreditation.

A speaker reminded the room of tragic incidents where unqualified solar panel installers caused fires and damage due to poor oversight.

The solution proposed was mobile accreditation units — enabling skilled but uncertified youth to be formally assessed, tested, and accredited without needing to travel or pay exorbitant fees.

This was presented not just as a policy recommendation, but as a moral obligation: **“How do we expect a township plumber to pay thousands to be accredited, when he barely makes enough to eat?”**



THEMATIC AREAS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

Agriculture, Technology, and Financing Innovation

A passionate contribution came from a young agri-tech entrepreneur who unpacked the invisible structural barriers facing black farmers. He explained how commercial farmers (almost exclusively white) have generational equity, track records, and access to preferential finance – while emerging black farmers are disqualified by the system for lacking historical data.

“There are two million emerging farmers in this country who eat what they grow but cannot scale because the finance model is rigged against them.”

He proposed a model of future-income based financing, powered by AI-driven risk profiling and predictive modelling. Using satellite data, crop analytics, and mobile disbursement tracking, this system could unlock the R1 billion currently sitting in the Land Bank – money that is “available in theory but inaccessible in practice.”

The room was riveted. Participants called for this approach to be formalised and integrated into policy pilots in partnership with the department.



The session surfaced a wide spectrum of interlinked themes, with participants collectively stressing that meaningful economic participation is the foundation for youth development. Using the “Pyramid of Life” framework – from work to income, lifestyle, and purpose – speakers argued that without dignified work, all else collapses. Urgency was placed on restructuring public funding, as current allocations to the department are grossly inadequate. Participants proposed tapping into underutilised provincial funds and aligning youth development with national crisis priorities to unlock greater resources. The fragmentation of youth programmes across departments was criticised, with calls for a consolidated, one-stop youth ecosystem. Strong emphasis was placed on digital equity, urging partnerships with platforms like Google and Meta to empower township youth through e-commerce and digital marketing skills. In artisan trades and agriculture, speakers demanded better accreditation pathways, mobile assessment units, and innovative financing for emerging farmers using AI-backed risk profiling. Crucially, the conversation returned often to the psychological toll of exclusion, with grassroots leaders describing a generation that is not disengaged but disillusioned, numbed by chronic lack of opportunity. A final theme was impact and accountability, with calls for youth policies to be judged not by inputs or enrollment numbers, but by tangible outcomes and lived change – because, as one speaker put it, “force without movement is not work.”

Systems Thinking, Legacy Metrics, and Policy Feedback Loops

This segment saw a plea for evidence-based policymaking and proper impact evaluation.

“In physics, work done is force multiplied by displacement. If there’s no displacement, it’s not work. Government must stop measuring inputs – and start measuring movement.”

Participants demanded that youth programmes be evaluated not by how many were enrolled, but by how many were employed or meaningfully changed. There was an appetite to design better metrics that reflect well-being, dignity, and sustainability – not just economic throughput.

Inclusion, Trauma, and the Psychology of Hopelessness

A sobering reminder came from grassroots leaders who shared that many young people are not disengaged – they are broken.

“I hosted a session in my church. The young people didn’t even care. They don’t have dreams. They just eat, sleep, and survive.”

This was not framed as apathy but a rational response to abandonment. Youth alienation, addiction, and even violence are not failures of morality – they are the result of a society that has erased pathways to purpose.

One participant powerfully stated: “We must stop expecting young people to carry the burden of resilience. Their pain is not proof of weakness – it is evidence of our failure.”





MINISTRY COMMITMENTS AND CANDID REFLECTIONS



Throughout the engagement, The Minister and ministry officials responded with notable candour and humility, acknowledging the structural and financial limitations hampering their ability to effect meaningful change. A recurring theme from the Ministry was the admission of budgetary constraints: Of the department's R1 billion budget, over R700 million is allocated to the NYDA, leaving only some R200 million for operations, programmes, logistics, and salaries. This, they acknowledged, contributes to the public's perception that the department is "invisible" — a joke erupted about how the department seldom makes the news because "there is nothing to steal."

Despite these constraints, the Ministry reaffirmed its commitment to implementation over rhetoric, highlighting catalytic projects which are embedded in the Presidential Performance Agreement. These projects are not merely aspirational; they are positioned within a national response framework that treats youth unemployment as a crisis comparable to war, demanding urgency, scale, and systemic solutions. A clear invitation was extended to participants to co-create and shape these initiatives, particularly those focused on youth enterprise, rural economic zones, digital skilling, domestic labour formalisation, and green energy integration.

Officials stressed that young people are no longer being treated as subjects of policy, but as partners in governance, with proximity to decision-makers and influence over real budget lines and state procurement policies. The special advisor to the Minister described this as a shift from "policy ideas in the wilderness" to "performance agreements tied to implementation." This new approach seeks to institutionalise youth voices in state planning — not through tokenistic consultations, but through direct co-design, embedded accountability, and measurable results.

Above all, the Ministry's tone was collaborative, transparent, and resolutely open. Repeated commitments were made to follow up on inputs, open new participation channels, and move beyond speeches into tangible interventions. As one official put it, "You are not far from the people who can say go."



Throughout the session, grassroots leaders — community organisers, faith-based actors, civic facilitators, and township-based practitioners — brought the discussion back to the majority of South African youth who remain disengaged, disillusioned, and distant from opportunity. Their reflections added vital texture and reminded the room that policy frameworks often fail to reflect lived experience.



We can't serve them if they don't believe they can be served."

These reflections went beyond statistics. They addressed what one speaker called the “emotional infrastructure” required to make any intervention land. The discussion acknowledged that many government programmes and youth initiatives are often calibrated for the most articulate, digitally literate, and socially mobile — young people who already believe in the system, know how to access it, and often have tertiary education. But the room was reminded that these youth are the exception, not the rule.

A recurring plea was made for policy and programming to better accommodate — and intentionally include — those considered “lost,” “unreachable,” or “unmotivated.” Rather than dismissing these youth as apathetic, contributors encouraged the Ministry to recognise this as a structural outcome of historical exclusion, intergenerational trauma, and systemic underinvestment.

Other insights included:

- The alienation of rural youth who feel completely unrepresented in national discourse.
- The spiritual and psychological exhaustion of community leaders who continually face the same crises with no institutional support.
- The dangers of visibility bias, where those already in the system become the measure of all youth.

Faith leaders in particular reflected on how they are already doing the work of government in informal ways — running after-school programmes, mediating domestic violence cases, hosting job-seeking workshops — often unpaid, unacknowledged, and unfunded.

There was a strong call for the Department to show up physically in these spaces. Youth, they argued, do not engage with the Department because it does not exist where they are — not in language, not in visibility, not in practice. The creation of mobile delivery units, community-based facilitators, or even WhatsApp-based support systems were offered as ways to overcome this divide.

In closing, the grassroots segment was a powerful reminder: there is no single youth voice. For any strategy to be truly national in scope, it must be rooted in the full spectrum of youth realities — especially those who do not self-select into policy spaces. Inclusion, they insisted, must not only be demographic. It must be psychological, spatial, and structural.

MEMORABLE QUOTES

The engagement was punctuated by moments of deep resonance — spontaneous statements that echoed both frustration and clarity, often met with nods and murmurs of agreement from the room. These were not just rhetorical flourishes, but distillations of years of lived experience, institutional disillusionment, and urgent insight.

“Stop being polite. You’re two steps from the President’s ear.”

This rallying statement came from the advisor to the minister, Dr Masutha, urging participants to abandon deference and speak boldly. It reframed the moment as one of rare proximity to power — not a listening exercise, but a space to shape agenda directly.



“We don’t have a funding problem. We have a political will problem.”

Said with controlled frustration, this line reflected a common theme: money exists in the system, but the architecture of decision-making often prevents it from reaching the people or causes that need it most.



“You can’t keep calling it a programme if it doesn’t change people’s lives.”

A searing critique of policy inertia and the illusion of action. Many initiatives, participants argued, are performative — marked by logos, slogans, and launches — but devoid of long-term transformation.

“The Department is treated like youth and women are treated in society — underfunded and undervalued.”

This reflection captured a sharp self-awareness within the Ministry itself. It recognised the structural under-resourcing of both the Department and its constituencies, and how that mirrors broader societal neglect.

Each of these quotes told a story — of power dynamics, systemic limitations, and the human cost of policy inertia — and they remain powerful touchpoints for those compiling follow-ups and planning next steps.



PROPOSALS AND CALLS TO ACTION



The session produced a rich stream of clear, constructive, and often urgent proposals — each grounded in participants’ lived experiences and professional expertise. The focus was not on diagnosing the crisis anew, but rather on offering workable, scalable, and often low-cost solutions to longstanding gaps.

Many proposals addressed systemic inefficiencies and suggested practical mechanisms to bridge the gap between policy and implementation. A key theme was delivery infrastructure: participants repeatedly emphasised that even where funding or policy frameworks exist, access remains limited due to logistical barriers, fragmented systems, or bureaucratic inertia. Among the standout proposals:

Mobile Accreditation Units for Artisans and Skilled Trades

Young people trained in trades like plumbing, electrical work, or solar panel installation often face barriers to formal accreditation due to cost, distance, or institutional rigidity. One participant working in the energy sector proposed the development of mobile testing and accreditation centres, which could travel to townships and rural areas to provide on-site certification. This would bridge the gap between informal skills and formal recognition — a crucial step toward employment and dignity.

Partnerships with Google, Meta and Tech Platforms for Digital Training

Another speaker, reflecting on the marginalisation of township entrepreneurs in the digital economy, called for direct partnerships with major tech firms. Platforms like Google Search, Meta Marketplace, and YouTube, they noted, can help young people scale their micro-enterprises — but only if they understand digital tools. The proposal was to introduce digital literacy and commerce training in high schools, particularly around SEO, social media selling, and content monetisation. This would democratise access to markets and reduce dependency on traditional employment.

Unified and Accessible Youth Databases

Multiple participants raised concerns about the duplication and siloing of youth data across departments and agencies. The call was for a centralised, interoperable youth database, containing real-time information on youth demographics, skills, educational status, and employment needs. Such a system could allow for better planning, targeting, and accountability across government — turning fragmented efforts into an integrated national strategy.

AI-Enabled Agri-Finance Tools for Black Women Farmers

In one of the session’s most detailed contributions, a young agri-entrepreneur described how data-driven credit modelling can help de-risk loans for emerging farmers. She proposed using AI to predict future income based on crop cycles, local weather, and land use patterns. Combined with better control of input dispersal, this model could unlock financing for black women farmers — currently excluded by traditional banking standards that rely on credit history rather than potential.

PROPOSALS AND CALLS TO ACTION

Youth Delivery Units Embedded in Communities

Participants called for mobile or embedded youth service units that could physically operate within communities. These would act as walk-in centres or travelling offices offering direct services – from application assistance to counselling, to programme referrals. Such units would increase trust, improve uptake, and provide a visible presence in areas where government often feels absent.

Well-being-Centred KPIs and Impact Measurement

A powerful critique emerged around how success is measured. Several participants argued that GDP growth, project counts, and disbursement figures do not adequately reflect whether lives are improving. They proposed new KPIs focused on well-being, dignity, and psychological security – including measures like youth self-belief, safety, purpose, and emotional wellness. As one participant noted: “You can’t keep calling it a programme if it doesn’t change people’s lives.”

Youth-Driven Legacy Projects for G20 and Beyond

With South Africa holding the G20 Women’s Empowerment Working Group chairship, youth participants proposed that youth-authored legacy projects be incorporated into the programme – from policy amendments for domestic workers, to new labour protections in the care economy. The idea is to institutionalise youth voices in multilateral forums, rather than relegating them to symbolic participation.

Taken together, these proposals reflect a youth cohort that is not only deeply aware of the challenges, but also brimming with implementable ideas. The call to the Ministry was unambiguous: Act. Partner. Deliver. Measure. Adjust. Scale.

Participants were less concerned with being heard than with being joined – joined in building new systems, new tools, and new accountability structures that treat their energy and insights not as anecdotes, but as infrastructure.



PRESENTATIONS AND SUBMISSIONS



TSHEPO NTSANE

Sustainable Finance Expert & Chemical Engineer

Tshepo Ntsane's presentation brought together personal narrative, statistical insight, and policy awareness — reminding the room that effective change demands both vision and execution. His journey from the mining town in the Free State to a national role in sustainable finance exemplifies youth excellence in action. A top-performing chemical engineering graduate from UCT and now a transactor in RMB's Sustainable Finance and ESG Advisory Team, Tshepo demonstrated the link between education, opportunity, and national transformation.

He challenged the room to interrogate existing youth policy frameworks and offered valuable feedback on policy gaps and fragmentation. In particular, his analysis of unemployment data, overlapping youth initiatives, and lack of outcome measurement prompted debate and reinforced the need for impact-led delivery. His emphasis on "monitoring outcomes, not activities" was echoed throughout the day.

FANELESIBONGE MBUYAZI

Software Engineer, Tech Entrepreneur & Youth Innovator

Fanelesibonge Mbuyazi gave a layered and strategic presentation that focused on how youth policy must meet the demands of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. As a software engineer at MultiChoice and founder of the tech platform SEEN, her contribution fused deep technical understanding with policy design.

Her written submission to the Honourable Minister focused on two critical transformation pillars — Healthcare and Education — offering a series of concrete, high-impact proposals:

- A Centralised National Health Intelligence System with integrated records, predictive analytics, and linkage to social grant tracking.
- A digitally aligned education system, where curricula match high-demand job sectors and students receive foundational digital training from high school through to university.

These proposals reflected the spirit of the Think Tank — practical, urgent, and scalable. They advanced the broader themes of dignity, access, and inclusion and have since been incorporated into the Ministry's post-engagement reflection process.

Together, these two presenters set a high bar for what meaningful youth participation can look like: well-researched, solutions-oriented, and tied to personal experience. They illustrated that South Africa's youth are not waiting to be rescued — they are already building the road forward.

SPIRIT OF COLLABORATION



Ms Asanda Luwaca
*Chairperson
NYDA*



Mr Simphiwe Masiza
*Founder & CEO
Empowaworx*



Mr Matoti Buthelezi
*Group Chief Executive
NEXEC*

The challenge of youth development in South Africa does not begin with ideas — it begins with delivery. And delivery demands more than intention; it requires collaboration, infrastructure, and belief. This gathering quietly modelled that.

The National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) played a catalytic role. As the Department's official execution agency, it supported the early framing of the conversation and helped co-develop the engagement concept alongside Ministry staff. Its role before the room filled was foundational — helping translate ambition into agenda.

Empowaworx, a private enterprise, then stepped in during the delivery phase — offering its offices as the venue, ensuring the room was both respectable and inspiring, and managing catering with grace and professionalism. This was not a formal partnership, but a voluntary act of civic contribution. Their presence affirmed that spaces shape discourse, and they ensured the setting honoured the seriousness of the work.

The National Executive Economic Collective (NEXEC), a youth-driven economic advisory and development firm, took up the responsibility of helping capture what unfolded. After the conversations had ended, NEXEC assisted in compiling this report — not only to preserve memory, but to ensure that tangible insights and clear next steps remained available to the Ministry for reflection and execution.

Together, these contributions offer more than gratitude — they reveal a model. The Ministry is underfunded relative to its vast and human-centred mandate. It cannot succeed alone. But when institutions like NYDA align early, when private actors like Empowaworx volunteer capacity in real time, and when civil society and young networks like NEXEC offer post-event continuity, a new kind of architecture becomes visible — one built on shared responsibility, voluntary service, and belief in what's possible.

In a context where budgets are tight and mandates are heavy, this type of multi-phase collaboration may not be the exception, but the way forward.

REFLECTIONS AND CLOSING REMARKS

This gathering was not a symbolic engagement — it was a live strategy session. Across the room, participants acknowledged a shift in tone and intention. The day was marked by candour, urgency, and a shared willingness to confront hard truths. For many, it was a first: a government space that truly felt open, collaborative, and youth-led.

“This wasn’t a consultation. This was strategy.”

“We need continuity, not another Youth Month moment.”

“The Ministry’s door is open — what we do next is on us.”

Throughout the session, participants expressed that they felt seen — not simply invited to speak, but invited to shape. The Ministry listened not to defend, but to act. That tone set the day apart: the difference between being in the room and being part of the room. Youth leaders from diverse backgrounds, sectors and provinces felt encouraged to speak with authority, to make bold proposals, and to hold government accountable — not adversarially, but in partnership.

In that way, the Ministerial Youth Think Tank marked a rare and meaningful turning point. It demonstrated what’s possible when government creates space for generative, non-performative engagement. The Ministry’s willingness to convene, sit in vulnerability, and share its limitations — including budget constraints and systemic inertia — was not perceived as weakness, but as leadership.

Young people reciprocated with substance: policy ideas, funding models, technologies, partnerships, and grassroots insights. It became clear that this was not just a good event — it was a productive governance moment.

This report captures the texture, proposals, and momentum generated. But its purpose is not only to document the past — it is to inform what comes next.

The call now is to transform this energy into institutional rhythm. That requires continuity, co-design, and action. And it requires everyone — in and beyond government — to take responsibility for delivery.

This is no longer about speaking truth to power. It’s about building power with truth.



THIS REPORT IS A REFLECTION OF A GATHERING SHAPED BY COLLECTIVE INSIGHT, OPENNESS, AND AN UNWAVERING COMMITMENT TO PROGRESS.

TO THE MINISTER OF WOMEN, YOUTH AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES, HON. SINDISIWE CHIKUNGA, THANK YOU FOR YOUR VISION, OPENNESS, AND POLITICAL COURAGE. YOUR COMMITMENT TO MEANINGFUL YOUTH PARTICIPATION — NOT AS A BOX-TICKING EXERCISE, BUT AS A ROUTE TO REAL PARTNERSHIP — SET THE TONE FOR THIS ENGAGEMENT.

TO THE MINISTRY TEAM, INCLUDING THE SPECIAL ADVISERS AND SENIOR OFFICIALS WHO LISTENED WITH INTENT AND RESPONDED WITH CANDOUR — YOUR PRESENCE AND PARTICIPATION ENSURED THE CONVERSATION WAS NOT SYMBOLIC, BUT STRATEGIC

TO THE PEOPLE WHO ATTENDED — THANK YOU FOR SHOWING UP WITH CLARITY, PURPOSE, AND SOLUTIONS. YOU BROUGHT THE URGENCY OF LIVED REALITIES INTO POLICY CONVERSATIONS, AND YOU DID SO WITH DISCIPLINE, IMAGINATION, AND FOCUS. YOUR INPUT STRENGTHENED THE DIALOGUE, AND YOUR PRESENCE GAVE IT DIRECTION.

THIS EVENT WAS NOT A SYMBOLIC MOMENT. IT WAS A MEANINGFUL STEP IN RESHAPING HOW YOUNG PEOPLE ARE ENGAGED — NOT AS BENEFICIARIES, BUT AS CO-CREATORS OF PUBLIC VALUE.

THANK YOU TO ALL WHO CONTRIBUTED, LISTENED, CHALLENGED, AND BUILT. WHAT COMES NEXT DEPENDS ON THE SAME ENERGY, RIGOUR, AND SPIRIT THAT DEFINED THE ROOM.

THANK YOU

