

SPEECH BY THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING, MR BUTI
MANAMELA, ON THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING BUDGET VOTE
2018/19

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, PARLIAMENT OF SOUTH AFRICA

17 MAY 2018

Honourable Chairperson, I join the Minister in presenting the 2018/19 Budget Vote 15 of the Department of Higher Education and Training.

Honourable Chairperson

Minister of Higher Education and Training – Ms Naledi Pandor

Ministers and Deputy Ministers

Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Higher Education and Training – Ms Connie September

Members of the Portfolio Committee on Higher Education and Training

Director General of the DHET – Mr Gwebs Nqonde

Heads and Executives of all our Post-School Institutions and Entities

DHET staff

Special guests of the DHET

The gruesome murder of Karabo Mokoena, a student at the University of Johannesburg, enraged our nation in 2017. The grim details of her murder splashed across our television screens and social media infuriating us and shocking our consciences. We find some solace in the conviction of her killer Sandile Mantsoe and applaud his conviction. But we are once again shaken by the murder of Zolile Khumalo, a student at the Mangosuthu University of Technology. Her murder accused, Thabani Mzolo, must be convicted and face the full wrath of the law. Justice must prevail.

Research by the Higher Education AIDS programme indicates that 10% of the total reported cases of rape across the country were from university students. This figure will likely increase if you take into account TVET colleges. A further 62% of students surveyed felt that female students would be sexually harassed on campus. An alarming 55% of male students think that sexual violence does not include forcing sex with someone you know.

The statistics are frightening. We are not revealing these statistics to shock the nation. But we have to confront this reality. Violence against women is a problem that must be rooted out within higher education and training. It is also a societal problem that calls all of us to act together. Our quest is to make our campuses safer. This is a call to action.

The DHET mandated the Higher Education AIDS to implement a comprehensive prevention, care and support sexual and gender based violence programme in the higher education sector to mitigate the problem. The goal is to develop an integrated model for managing sexual and gender-based violence at all our campus sites with specific emphasis on policy interventions to reduce violence against women, to improve victim/survivor support services and to challenge gender-based violence more broadly in society. We will launch the GBV Policy and Strategy Framework for the higher education sector in August 2018. This sectoral policy that will open a wide range of programmes to mitigate the problem.

Together with HEAIDS and the Karabo Mokoena Foundation, I will be launching a campaign in June focussing on violence against women and other safety issues on campuses. We hope that through this campaign we will excite students into action. I call upon student leaders and student organisations to fully participate in this campaign.

We also want our students to be healthy and to lead healthy lifestyles. The Higher Education AIDS programme runs across all 400 university and public TVET college campus sites. Through the provision of free mobile health and wellness screening, the First Things First programme has seen a significant increase of students who tested early for HIV, TB and STIs within the sector. Over 203 000 students took up HIV/TB/STI and other general health and wellness services, last year. Using a peer to peer model, HEAIDS mobilised over 600 000 student advocates for its health, well-being and healthy lifestyles interventions.

Minister Pandor has spoken extensively about the policy and implementation of fee free higher education for the poor and working class. This policy decision must be viewed within the historical struggles waged by students and communities for free education. As a result of the global economic crisis of 2008 and its impact on social expenditure, there was a push for caution on fee free higher education. Government has indeed taken a correct decision to make this critical investment for the present and the future generations. We are seeing the effects of mobilising young people to make education fashionable. Fee free higher education for the poor and working class will have a dramatic impact on our future. It will change individual lives, families and communities.

The investment that government is making in higher education is not an indication for the private sector to relax and take its foot off the pedal. Rather, we want the private sector to play an even bigger role. And so we call upon the private sector to match government's contribution to higher education and training. We will all benefit from this investment.

A critical part of our post school education and training system is our Technical and Vocation Education and Training Colleges. TVET colleges are at the forefront of providing post school education and training options for our youth.

The bursary allocation for TVET Colleges has increased from R2.437 billion in 2017 to R5.164 billion in 2018 representing a 112% allocation increase. The additional funding will take the programme funding level of TVET colleges from the current 54% to 69% in 2018/19 with the target of 80% being reached in approximately four years. For 2018/19, an additional R2.5 billion will be made available for student fees including travel and accommodation allowances. This additional funding will ensure that qualifying TVET students will be fully subsidised for student fees and travel or accommodation where relevant. Considerable investment is being made for the expansion of the TVET sector.

We have heard your call for better quality TVET programmes and we are strengthening both programme quality and college performance. TVET colleges have presented their performance reports with a comparison of the 2016 and 2017 performance focusing on poor performing subjects. A strategy is being developed to address the nationally identified poor performing subjects. The clear roles of academic boards, academic managers, campus managers and lecturers will be defined in college improvement and action plans. Our DHET regional officials are supporting TVET colleges to implement the teaching and learning improvement plan. We want to see more stable, functional, better governed TVET colleges that offer high quality programmes.

The low certification rates of TVET students are a concern. With the significant investment that government is making, we must ensure that certification rates improve. In addressing this challenge the department has already seen some success and will endeavour to meet the MTSF target of 65% certification rate for NCV Level 4 as well as N3 and N6 qualifications.

We have heard your cries over the certification backlogs and over the years the department has steadily addressed the problem. While this challenge has largely been resolved, we still receive queries. We will attend to and satisfactorily address all outstanding and unresolved certification issues.

We have heard the call of industry and our Colleges of Specialisation Project is an innovative action to address the demand for priority trades. We need these priority trades for the implementation of government's National Development Plan in general and its National Infrastructure Plan in particular. Colleges of Specialisation contributes towards building capacity of the public TVET College system to deliver trade qualifications with employer partners. Following a period of intensive research, we have established thirteen trades that are particularly in short supply. We have contracted with four industry associations – the Steel and Engineering Industries of Southern Africa, the Retail Motor Industries, the Southern African Institute of Welding and the Institute of Plumbers of South Africa to help us to upgrade two colleges per trade with a total of 26 colleges.

By the end of June 2018 the curricula for each trade will be updated to industry standards, a process which industry partners have led. The transformation of the curricula is imperative for greater alignment with industry needs.

As the TVET system expands, we are aware of the governance challenges faced by many TVET colleges. The department is developing a Framework for Good Governance and will conduct an initial assessment of all TVET colleges against this framework. Further training, capacity building and monitoring will take place to improve governance. Good management and governance will ensure that scarce resources are used optimally. TVET colleges are community resources and their success is our success. We have heard your pleas for a better TVET college system and having fixed some of the problems, we will continue to strengthen the system. Parents and youth are encouraged to strongly consider taking up their education at our 50 public TVET colleges. TVET colleges are our future.

Together with the National Student Financial Aid Scheme, we will launch the Pioneers programme. Over the last 27 years, NSFAS and its predecessor, has assisted more than 3 million students investing a staggering amount of over R60 billion in the process. So the next time that you ask “what has this government done”, think about this human resource investment. We will celebrate NSFAS assisted individuals who are succeeding in their respective professions.

The pioneers programme will inspire our current generation to graduate and make a success of their careers. I am delighted that 3 pioneers of this programme could be here today. Seated in the gallery are: Ms Veronica Motloutsi from Soshaguve who is currently the CEO of SmartHome Connect Pty Ltd. Mr Aaron Moloisi from Ga-Dikgale whom you may have seen as an SABC presenter of Shift and Take 5. Mr Laduma Ngxokolo from Port Elizabeth who is an accomplished fashion designer and the owner of Maxhosa by Laduma clothing brand.

Watch this space for #IamAPioneer

Recently we saw young people graduate from institutions all across our country. Their elation was captured on #CelebrateGraduate and other social media. They came in their finest fashion cloaked with their graduation gowns. Congratulations to Katlego Masoga, Chrysantha Palan, Zingisa Socikwa, Mamashoabathe Noko, Monene Ramadimetja, Lindelwa Mhlungula and all those who graduated in 2018. Your graduation did not come easy. It is a sign of hard work and progress. A special congratulations to the 72 year old Dr Delphyne Murray from the University of Fort Hare who showed

us that you are never too old to learn. Our graduates have truly inspired those who are studying and showed that there is no short cut to success. They have made the ultimate fashion statement by making education fashionable. And as Nelson Mandela said, "education is the ultimate equaliser".

Indeed it is good to be a graduate.