



basic education

Department:
Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Address by the Minister of Basic Education, Mrs Angie Motshekga, MP, at the NECT Bootcamp Programme, held at the Glenburn Lodge, Muldersdrift and Online

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Programme Director

Mr Sizwe Nxasana: Chairman of the NECT Board and Trustees

Mr Godwin Khosa: NECT CEO and Senior Management

Basic Education DG: Mr Mathanzima Mweli

Prof Mary Metcalfe and other academics

Partners, local and international

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is always a rare privilege to work with the NECT brain trust, especially u-Ntate Nxasana and Khosa.

Since the launch of the NECT, we have forged meaningful relationships, scored successive victories against all the odds, but most importantly, we have learned from each other, supported each other in sickness and in health.

Programme Director, I rise to applaud this NECT initiative Bootcamp Programme which seeks to build an academically astute and ideological attuned professional to take the SA education reform project into the future.

We need Education 2.0.

The post-Covid-19 social compact, if you insist.

In the main, this Bootcamp Programme is about finding the human capital to power the Developmental State well into the future.

Our march to Vision 2030, as espoused by the National Development Plan (NDP), requires a Developmental State.

The Developmental State plays an active role in guiding economic development and using all the resources (including human capital) of the country to meet the needs of the people.

A Developmental State balances the tenuous link between economic growth and social development.

It uses state resources and state influence to attack poverty and expand economic opportunities.

In all countries, the State plays some role in shaping the structure and output of the economy.

Yet a Developmental State is a different beast in that it uses a variety of instruments and policies like the regulation of industry, trade and competition.

It also actively participate in the redistribution of incomes and assets and uses fiscal and monetary policies to improve the human condition.

Sometimes the Developmental State finds it necessary to effect state ownership in key industries.

As I have said, Programme Director, SA has chosen a Developmental State not because it is fashionable to do so.

Because our country requires a Developmental State to efficiently guide the national economic development by mobilising society's resources and directing them towards achieving common goals, including social development.

Only a Developmental State places the needs of the poor and social issues such as universal health care, social housing, free basic education and a social safety net at the top of its national agenda.

A Developmental State we seek to build must direct and support economic development by building a solid and capable state.

A State capable of restoring faith in the capacity of the Government to improve the human condition.

All of these tasks of the Developmental State places a strong emphasis on the State's human capacity to carry out its developmental mandate.

The success of a Developmental State also depends on the active involvement of social partners, hence President Cyril Ramaphosa's drive to create industry-specific master plans.

Programme Director; I have sketched the nature of the Developmental State as envisaged in the NDP.

I have done so knowing fully aware that I was only asked to critically reflect and share some thoughts on the pillars required to achieve the objectives of this Developmental State.

I want to focus on just one pillar: the Role of Professionals in a Developmental State.

As ama-2000 would say, history has no blank pages.

To understand what we need to do in 2021, let's go back 100 years ago.

Africa's oldest liberation movement, the ANC, has since its launch in 1912 been led by a coterie of academically astute and ideological attuned intellectuals.

In short, that is what our country needs today: a coterie of academically astute and ideological attuned intellectuals.

The founding fathers of the ANC, including our first President-General Comrade John Langalibalele Dube, was an intellectual par excellence.

He was a teacher and a speaker of note on the circuit engaging whites in lectures around the country.

In his genetic make-up, he wanted to advance the noble ideals of non-racialism.

He gave many lectures on the invitation and was awarded a Doctorate of Philosophy as a result.

In 1901 Cde Dube founded the “Zulu Christian Industrial School”, which is now the Ohlange High School at iNanda, near Durban.

This was the first educational institution in South Africa to be founded by a black person.

He also founded a school for girls.

President-General Dube understood the power of education.

He had the necessary foresight to know that 100 years later, the face of poverty will still remain black and female.

Most importantly, President Dube knew 100 years ago that the future was female; hence he founded a School for Girls.

He also founded a newspaper; iLanga LaseNatali

He knew that to be a leader of society, one must engage and win in the battle of ideas.

Today there's a dearth of intellectuals in the public discourse as the march towards good-think takes hold, primarily driven by Twitter and Facebook warriors.

President Dube knew the strategic importance of harnessing the power of the media; hence he founded a newspaper that is still in operation even today.

Ironically today, Ilanga is owned by an Inkatha company, our political rivals.

President Dube was thrust into history as a midwife of the present-day post-apartheid SA.

Thus he played an essential role in building the foundation of a non-racial, non-sexist, democratic and prosperous South Africa.

He was a pioneer in the true sense of the word.

In other words, President-General Dube used his education, time and expertise for the benefit of humanity, not fame and fortune.

He combined the rigours of academic life with the rough and tumble of political action necessary to bring about meaningful transformation, revolutionary change if you insist.

He didn't just study and ventilate about the human condition from the safety of the Ivory Towers but got his hands dirty to effect fundamental change in the human condition.

As we reconnect with our eminent forebears, it is time to invoke another giant historical figure of our struggle: Mama Charlotte Maxeke.

Mama Charlotte Maxeke made an indelible impact on many areas, including education, faith and politics.

It is the 150th year since the birth of this giant, our original Mother of the Nation: uMama Charlotte Mannya Maxeke.

Our Government declared 2021 as the year “Year of Charlotte Mannya Maxeke”.

She was a woman of many “firsts”.

She was the first black woman to graduate and obtain a BSc Degree in Southern Africa in 1901.

She was also the first woman to participate in the King’s Court under King Sabata Dalindyebo of AbaThembu.

She founded a school under this Royal Family, and for all her efforts, she was given the name Nogazo as a salutation of honour.

She later established another school in Evaton, Gauteng, in 1908 (Wilberforce Institute), inspired by her experience at Wilberforce in Ohio.

History books attest that she was the only woman that attended the first African National Congress (ANC) conference in 1912.

She was founding President of the Bantu Women's League in 1918, which later became ANC Women's League.

We owe both President Dube, President Maxeke and many a freedom fighter and intellectual of their generation a massive debt of gratitude.

We salute them for their selfless contribution to the liberation of our country from the yoke of the apartheid pariah regime.

Comrades Dube and Maxeke emptied themselves to improve the human condition through education and their unyielding commitment to the need for fundamental social change.

With their passing, a century of struggle went with them.

It is our duty as the present mandarins to keep their memory alive.

It is our moral responsibility to ensure that their legacies live on.

It is often said that Comrade Dube and Maxeke cannot die while we are alive.

We can only keep the flames of social justice they lit over 100 years by becoming combatants for the truth, education and human development.

We must shun fame, rent-seeking and vanity.

I invoke their names for one reason: they were both teachers, social justice activists, freedom fighters, innovators and most importantly, selfless individuals.

As I said earlier, the strategic vision of our Government is to create a Developmental State.

I repeat the Developmental State must hasten to bring about the creation of a non-racial, non-sexist, democratic, united and prosperous society.

Fortunately for us in the education sector, we know that only education can help humanity to realise these noble goals: non-racial, non-sexist, democratic, united and prosperous society.

In Maxeke's seminal words: "Prejudices, it is well known, are most difficult to eradicate from the heart whose soil has never been loosened or fertilised by education; they grow there, firm as weeds among stones".

In short, we need to scale the rapid production of the Dube and Maxekes tenfold if we are to meet the NDP's goal of having a capable State by 2030.

There is a Dube in every man.

There's a Maxeke in every woman.

There's a Dube and Maxeke in all of us.

The founding principles of Africa's oldest liberation movement, the ANC, have continued to find expression in a plethora of government

documents and policy positions, including the Freedom Charter and our internationally celebrated 1996 Constitution Act.

Our Constitution turned 25 years this year.

Our Constitution calls for healing of the wounds of the past and building society at peace with itself, non-racial, non-sexist and founded on civil liberties and social justice.

As combatants for truth, we must reject the narrative that some black lives matter and others don't, depending on how they died or were killed.

The recent mayhem in our country left over 337 people dead.

We must mourn for all of them, irrespective of how they were killed.

We must seek justice for all of them, not just the political and conveniently termed #Phoenix 22.

Put differently, we must seek justice, not retribution.

We must reject the notion that it is okay to steal from white-owned businesses.

We must reject the notion that it is okay to steal from Indian owned businesses.

We are aware that the yearning desire of our forebears to improve the human condition of Africans in particular and blacks, in general, remains unfulfilled.

But much work has been done.

We need to do more.

But, what is to be done today in the context of the Developmental State?

We need a new type of professional. A new cadre, as it were.

Perhaps not a new cadre out of thin air?

We need a new professional in 2021 who boasts of President Dube and Maxeke's political consciousness combined.

Our new professionals must be imbued with the ethos of liberation ideology, aspire to serve humanity and become lifelong learners.

Our new professional must exude the humility of Walter Sisulu, the bravery of Chris Hani, and the working ethic of President Oliver Tambo.

The new professional must empty herself like Dube and Maxeke combined to improve her personal circumstances and the human condition beyond their village.

I recall that former President Thabo Mbeki once dreamt of a 'new cadre', the sort of ANC member who would keep faith with the party's founding values and objectives.

I, too, dream of a new education professional, a new type of civil servant.

While being driven by the pursuit of professional advancement and enjoying the fruits of freedom, he/she is conscious of the historical mission to bring about a Better Life for our people.

While this professional climbs the proverbial corporate ladder, she remains grounded amongst her people.

The new professionals that must emerge from this boot camp are life-long learners, innovators and contributors to the public discourse.

But above all, they must exhibit the proper ideological learning; and be guided by a desire to be on the right side of history.

I call upon all of you to be driven by an unyielding desire to advance the course of social justice, democracy and prosperity.

Programme Director; we need to ask uncomfortable questions of the post-apartheid mandarins.

How many black professionals have since 1994 founded new schools that offer better prospects for the children of the middle class and working-class poor?

How many black professionals have seamlessly integrated their public service work with social entrepreneurship to improve the human condition in their communities?

How many black professionals today shun fame and fortune like Presidents Dube and Maxeke while selflessly improving the human condition?

How many black professionals refuse to participate in the looting of the public purse?

It is a shame that in one year, the latest figures show that a staggering amount of R54,34 billion (national government) and R14,4 billion (municipalities) was misspent.

How many black professionals take advantage of our democracy to study abroad because they are thirsty to improve their qualifications and the human condition?

We need a new cadre of a civil servants, not only armed with tertiary qualifications and a certificate of competence from the School of Government – but this cadre must also be progressive, innovative, competent, caring, and people-centric.

We also need a new cadre of consultants who will deliver lasting solutions to the public service and complete the task within budget and on time.

We also need a new cadre of a tenderpreneur whose cost estimate is fair and just and whose work is of the highest standard and quality.

In other words, we do not want to be seek-seekers.

This new cadre of a tenderpreneur ensures that whatever project they are involved in becomes a completed project and is handed over to the people on time and within budget.

In short, we envisage the role of professionals as that of a cohort of people with specialised skills that must be made available to the State.

These new cadres/professionals I am talking about are sitting here among us.

We just need to awaken the correct ideological consciousness amongst them.

The new professionals must be proactive and lead the development of our country.

They must advise the Government on cost-effective means of initiating and completing complex infrastructure projects.

The ANC and Government it leads are open for business. Let us work together for the betterment of our children's future.

Posterity will judge us harshly should we dare fail.

Let us dare not fail.

More than ever, South Africa needs you today; a new type of cadre, professional or civil servant.

In conclusion, for the next five days, let a hundred flowers bloom; let a hundred schools of thought contend.

I thank you.