

## **DM SPEECH AT THE EVENT: PROPERTY AND CONSTRUCTION CAREER WEEK 2015**

Honored Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Scholars, please accept my warm greetings.

Let me begin by thanking the Property Sector Charter Council for hosting this important event. An event that promotes property and construction as careers of choice. I thank them for inviting me to participate at this important event. We take note and appreciate all stakeholders' efforts to ensure that this important Sector attracts young learners especially from our Townships where we are faced with challenges that only they can solve.

This audience of young learners carries our hopes, our aspirations and our dreams of a brighter and prosperous future. Anyone can tear down, disrupt and destroy. To do that takes only a few short moments. However it takes vision, talent, skills and determination to BUILD. Therefore awakening the desires, dreams and aspirations of our Youth is a crucial task for which the Property Sector Charter Council must be applauded. These are times to cast off limits: To think out of the box and explore all your options.

Young people that are interested in property and construction provide us with hope for a better future, especially with regards to BUILDING and DEVELOPING infrastructure development in our country. This occasion is particularly special since it has brought together all these youngsters from across this province to come, listen and learn from specialists, researchers and practitioners of the construction industry. This is a great event to teach our young people about the

important role that property and construction plays in the economic and social development of our country.

It is particularly encouraging to note that the call that we have been making in a number of public forums for industry, researchers and academics partner with government in raising the contribution of the construction industry in achieving development objectives, is being strengthened. It is only in working together that we can move SA forward. Learners tend to make uninformed career choices and thereafter fail to complete their studies. The high dropout rate in our institutions contributes to high youth unemployment, exclusion and youth alienation.

The South African Government adopted a National Infrastructure Plan in 2012 with this plan we aim to transform our economic landscape while simultaneously creating significant numbers of new jobs, and strengthen the delivery of basic services. The plan also supports the integration of African economies. Government will over the three years from 2013/14 invest R827 billion in building new and upgrading existing infrastructures. These investments will improve access by South Africans to healthcare facilities, schools, water, sanitation, housing and electrification. On the other hand, investment in the construction of ports, roads, railway systems, electricity plants, hospitals, schools and dams will contribute to faster economic growth.

We know that the property sector in South Africa has grown to a three trillion rand industry, while construction has always played a pivotal role in the development of humanity through the ages. Even today, it is still playing the same role. Construction's value to society is primarily the provision of infrastructure. It provides value to those that derive economic and social benefits from the built environment. That value is derived from creating the built environment. Construction creates the foundations of our global economy and

the basis for human advancement. It also accounts for about ten percent of the global economy and provides much needed employment and dignity to millions of people around the world.

One of the biggest challenges we currently face in South Africa's property industry is that of skills development. In fact, figures by the Higher Education Department point to a shortage of 46,000 artisans in South Africa. This shortfall is a major concern, as indicated in PwC's SA Construction 2014 report, which stated that more than two-thirds of CEOs in the construction sector were most anxious about access to key skills. This challenge needs the youth of a different breed to take it head on.

In addition the property and construction sector can be a field of dreams with a myriad of opportunities for new job seekers. The sector will need people to construct, finance, market, insure, maintain, beautify and decorate these old and new buildings and facilities.

Just think of the opportunities:

Construction professionals,

Town Planners, Property Valuers, Estate Agents, Auctioneers, Property inspectors, Engineers, Architects, Landscapers, Insurers, Bankers, Plumbers, Electricians, Bricklayers, Stonemasons, Plant hire business women,

The sky is the limit depending on your talent and drive! So explore, ask questions, see the opportunity not the limitations. Remember don't think inside the box. There is no box.

South Africa is not unfamiliar with expressions of youth power. The 1976 protests that shook the country effectively set into motion the struggle that would

successfully bring an end to the apartheid regime. These youth were successful in imagining a new and brighter future for us all. The role that young activists have played in our country's transition speaks to the transformative power of youth, and youth leadership. Young South Africans are caught in a space between a violent history, defined by extreme exclusion and gross infringements of human rights – and a post-apartheid 'rainbow nation' that is buckling under an ever-growing weight of crime, poverty and deep inequality. This paradoxical crisis – the promise of a bright future through a new dispensation and the frustrations of our lived realities – has pushed young people into new struggles and pro-democracy demonstrations the world over.

We all need to shift our perceptions beyond the current singular narrative of South African youth as violent, uneducated, unemployable and unemployed. Young people need, and deserve, to be recognized as the powerful agents of social transformation and change that many will become.

Although the efforts of 1976 were for a different cause, the same level of dedication is needed by the youth of today to fight for a different cause – the fight for economic emancipation, which can only be won by tackling unemployment. Today's youth is liberated, but the level of unemployment among them is a social ill experienced throughout the world. Addressing this issue is very important in realizing government's Vision 2030.

Vision 2030 is a programme to promote mass entrepreneurship in South Africa. In its proposals on the economy and employment, the plan predicts that small and expanding firms will produce 90% of the new jobs needed for full employment. Young people are a major human resource for development, often acting as key agents for social change, economic expansion and innovation. Their imagination, ideals, energy and vision are essential for the continuous development of society

I therefore encourage you our youth gathered here today to be energized by the opportunities that you will be exposed to, be engaged, and seek out your futures as construction and property professionals. There is much opportunity to get into this industry and make a change.

It is upon you to change the conditions in your townships and your neighbouring informal settlements. It starts with you wanting to afford your communities the best environments to live in, safer neighborhoods and dignified households. It starts with you having a vision for yourself and for your country. Start seeing the possibility of being a game changer, being the solution provider to your community.

Gone are the days where you will sit and blame the government for not bringing food in a silver platter. It's time you stood up and do what John F Kennedy recommends;

**“ask not what my country can do for me, but what can I do for my country.”**

Utilise your creativity and talents to transform the future of this country. However, it demands that you desire to move away from the norm and the ordinary. Be bold, stand up and be counted and pursue your dreams.

We are hopeful that after the three days of interactions with different professionals, you will choose a career in the Construction or Property Sector and be part of the labor force to support the Strategic Infrastructure Projects (SIPs). Programme Director, as a caring government we will continue to ensure that more young people are educated and empowered to tap into the mainstream economic opportunities and in doing so we will step up education and training opportunities for our young people. In conclusion, I wish to encourage young

people gathered here to take ownership of Mandela's quote of encouraging our youth to prosper. I quote "**Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world**" I close quote. Are you empowering yourself to take advantage of it to make personal and professional goals a reality? By leveraging emerging opportunities and trends, anyone can unlock their potential for greatness.

I wish you well in your discussions and deliberations.

I thank you.