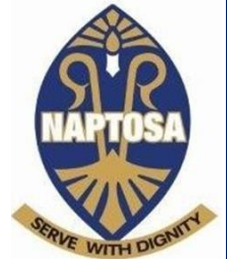


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NNF 25 of 2023

16 June 2023

Youth Day – 16 June

This year marks the 47th anniversary of the June 16 Soweto uprising, which ended tragically with hundreds of young people brutally killed in the name of equal education. NAPTOSA, in unison with South Africa as a whole, commemorates this Youth Day under the theme, “Accelerating youth economic emancipation for a sustainable future”. This is a crucial goal that requires concerted efforts from various stakeholders, including governments, educational institutions, businesses, and young people themselves. When young people have access to economic opportunities and are empowered to participate in the economy, they can contribute to their own well-being and the development of their communities. The following areas need to be prioritised to promote youth economic empowerment and sustainability:

1. **Education and Skills Development:** Enhance educational systems to provide relevant and high-quality education that equips young people with the skills needed for the future job market. Promote the ‘three stream model’ which makes provision for vocational and technical skills education to encourage self-employment and innovation.
2. **Access to Finance:** Establish inclusive financial systems to create youth-specific financial products and services tailored to their needs, such as start-up grants and low-interest loans.
3. **Job Creation and Workforce Integration:** Collaborate with businesses to generate more employment opportunities for young people. Encourage companies to adopt inclusive hiring practices and provide internships, apprenticeships, and on-the-job training to bridge the gap between education and employment.
4. **Digital Literacy and Technology Adoption:** Promote digital literacy amongst young people to equip them with the skills needed for the digital economy. Ensure access to affordable and reliable internet connectivity, and encourage the use of technology for social entrepreneurship, and online learning.
5. **Policy and Advocacy:** Advocate for youth-friendly policies that address barriers to economic empowerment, such as discriminatory practices, lack of access to resources, and limited representation in decision-making processes. Involve young people in policy dialogues and decision-making to ensure their voices are heard.
6. **Sustainable Development and Environmental Awareness:** Integrate sustainability and environmental awareness into education programs. Encourage young people to develop and adopt sustainable practices in their businesses and daily lives, promoting circular economy principles and responsible consumption.

7. **Mentoring and Networking:** Establish mentoring programs that connect experienced professionals with young entrepreneurs and professionals. Facilitate networking opportunities and platforms for knowledge sharing, collaboration, and peer support amongst young people.
8. **Youth Participation and Leadership:** Empower young people to actively participate in decision-making processes at all levels. Create platforms for youth representation and leadership in economic and sustainability initiatives, enabling them to shape policies and programs that affect their future.

NAPTOSA believes that accelerating youth economic emancipation is a transformative endeavour with far-reaching implications for sustainable development. By prioritising access to education, fostering entrepreneurship, promoting financial inclusion, establishing networks and mentorship programs, enacting youth-friendly policies, leveraging technology, and encouraging sustainable development, societies can unlock the immense potential of young people. Collaboration amongst governments, businesses, civil-society organisations, and young individuals themselves is vital to accelerate youth economic emancipation and pave the way for a prosperous and sustainable future.

Happy Youth Day, South Africa!

Mr BL Manuel

Executive Director