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THURSDAY, 19 JUNE 2025

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PROCEEDINGS OF THE WESTERN CAPE PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT

The sign † indicates the original language and [ ] directly thereafter indicates a translation.

[Hybrid Sitting held with some members present in the House and some in virtual attendance through Microsoft Teams]

The House met at 14:15.

The hon Deputy Speaker took the Chair and read the prayer.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please be seated. Order members! Before we proceed it is my honour to welcome members of the respective junior city councils, young youth leaders from the areas of Paarl, Malmesbury, here in the City of Cape Town, including Nyanga, as well as young people from Theewaterskloof.

During the month of June we not only celebrate young people, but we are also acutely aware that young people are not only the leaders of tomorrow, but also the leaders of now. I trust that you will feel welcomed, and also to councillor Poggenpoel and the leaders that are accompanying the young people. Thank you so much for your attendance in the gallery today.

Hon members, I do not need to remind you of the Standing Rules hence we will commence promptly and we will now deal with the Speaker's Debate in terms of Rule 147 as printed on the Order Paper. I now recognise the hon Kaizer-Philander.

## **SPEAKER'S DEBATE**

### *Commemorating Youth Day*

Ms W F KAIZER-PHILANDER (DA): Thank you very much, hon Deputy Speaker. Hon Deputy Speaker, members, citizens of the Western Cape, and especially the young people in the gallery today, †en dit maak veral my hart baie warm om te hoor dat die Paarl is hier, dit is my huismense, maar ook my alma mater, Paulus Joubert Hoër [and it especially warms my heart to hear that Paarl is also here, they are my home people, but also my alma mater, Paulus Joubert High.]

Annually on June 16<sup>th</sup> we honour the fearless youngsters of 1976, those who stood unarmed against an unjust regime. They did not have wealth or influence but a far greater conviction.

Today, nearly 50 years later, our youth is faced with a different kind of struggle, one not waged in the streets but in silence in bedrooms; not against tear gas and bullets, but poverty, addiction, exclusion and despair. Let us not

sugar-coat the truth, our youth is in crisis. They might smile on Instagram and laugh on TikTok, but there are cries behind the filters. They scroll through curated lives while fighting mental health battles we do not see. They are burdened, tired and too often not heard.

†Adjunkspeaker, angs, depressie, selfdoodgedagtes, hierdie is nie net woorde nie, dit is die realiteit, en volgens studies ervaar een uit elke sewe tieners geestesgesondheidsprobleme, maar te veel bly stil, vasgevang tussen skaamte, stigmatisering en die vrees om nie verstaan te word nie. [Deputy Speaker, fear, depression, suicide thoughts, these are not just words, it is a reality, and according to studies one out of every seven teenagers suffers from mental health problems, but too many keep quiet, caught up between shame, stigmatising and the fear not to be understood.]

Hon Deputy Speaker, mental health is not just one layer, many of our young people live under intense academic pressure, unstable homes, and the crushing weight of poverty, and when that weight becomes too much they escape, not out of rebellion but out of desperation. They turn to substances, to gangsterism, not because they want to destroy their lives, but because no one showed them how to build one. †Ons kan nie toekyk nie. Ons kan nie wag tot dit te laat is voor ons hande uitsteek nie, [We cannot just look on. We cannot wait until it is too late before we reach out,] but hon Deputy Speaker, there is hope.

The Western Cape Department of Social Development is taking this crisis

seriously, from expanding youth focused substance abuse programmes, to skills development through MOD centres; to child and youth care centres that provide care and structure to those most at risk, working to build the scaffolding that supports healing and empowerment. But we must go further. Opportunity should not just be created, it should be accessible. Young people must not only benefit from solutions, they must shape them. Let us open platforms where young ones challenge us, where they advise us, and where they inspire us.

†Ons jong mense is nie 'n las nie, [Our youth are not a burden,] they are a force to partner with. As a member of the Western Cape Provincial Parliament I have heard that our young people are crushed by unemployment, our young people are robbed by drugs; our young people are abandoned by systems meant to uplift them. Our young people are not statistics, they are names and they are faces.

†Adjunkspeaker, ons beleid moet nie net op papier wees nie, dit moet leef in die strate van Ceres, Khayelitsha, in die huise van Vredendal en Mitchells Plein. [Deputy Speaker, our policy should not only be on paper, it should live in the streets of Ceres, Khayelitsha, in the house of Vredendal and Mitchells Plain.] It must not only promise a future, it should deliver the “now.” This future goes beyond the responsibility of Government. It belongs to families, to churches, to teachers and to neighbours. When we step back, others step in, and they do offer purpose, they offer poison. Let us raise a generation that is woke, not just socially, but spiritually, economically and politically. Let

them know their worth is not in likes of followers or fame. Our youth should know their worth is in their character, their voice and their power to choose.

†Agbare Adjunkspeaker, die gesegde lui, die jeug is die toekoms. Die jeug is nie net 'n belofte vir môre nie, ons jeug is 'n prioriteit vir vandag. Laat Jeugdag nie net 'n herdenking wees nie maar 'n beweging, [Hon Deputy Speaker, the saying goes, the youth are the future. The youth are not just a promise for tomorrow, our youth are a priority for today. Let Youth Day not only be a commemoration, but a movement,] a moment to say, we see you, we believe in you, and we will not give up on you. To our youth, you are not broken, you are burdened, a burden that does not define you, a burden that refines you. Your future is not cancelled, it is calling. Own your voice, own your life and own your future. I thank you, hon Deputy Speaker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Kaizer-Philander. I recognise the hon Stoffel.

Ms B N STOFFEL (ANC): Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. I hope I am audible.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: You may proceed.

Ms B N STOFFEL (ANC): Good afternoon to the members of the Provincial Parliament and also the citizens of the Western Cape. Hon Deputy Speaker, we are here [Audio distorted - Inaudible 0:08:29] this is something that needs

to be said, we have neglected our youth in the province. 32% of the youth age 15 to 24 are classified as not having employment, education or training, according to the Western Cape Government Youth Development Strategy. We know this is even worse in the rural areas and townships. [Audio distorted - Inaudible 0:08:53] neglected youth and losing them to gang violence.

On 12 June 2018, Dan Plato, the then Minister of Community Safety spoke at the launch of the Department of Community Safety Life Counts programme as part of the Youth Month, he said: “we see too many [Audio distorted - Inaudible 0:09:10] buying in our streets, we see too many youngsters running around with guns and choosing a criminal life of gangsterism.”

Hon Deputy Speaker, this Government has been aware of the risks that the youth face, they know of the challenges facing the youth, but they have yet to bring solutions. Hon Deputy Speaker, we are talking about systematic solutions that address the level of school dropouts in the province, for those who have completed their school journey, training that would enable them to have a skill for the current job market. The challenges facing our youth require a holistic approach and not the current fragmented governance we have in the province.

Hon Deputy Speaker, the Youth Day came and went with no significant youth campaign in the Western Cape commemorating the youth of the 1976 that left their lives for the liberation of the country and the significant role they played. Hon Deputy Speaker, the youth can play a huge role in the province

given the opportunities and resources. In the communities such as Hanover Park, Manenberg, Elsies River, Delft, Bishop Lavis and Mitchells Plain, gang warfare is an everyday occurrence. Streets become warzones, school routes become ambush spots, and playgrounds turn into shooting ranges.

Hon Deputy Speaker, there is a lack of investment in our youth in the province. The DA has invested in militarised policing strategies like the LEAP Programme, but where are the social workers, where are the after school centres, where is the funding for trauma counselling for learners who witness shootings daily? Where are the job readiness programmes? Where are the learnerships and the mentors? Where is the will to stop treating this youth as threats and start seeing them as victims of systematic neglect?

As the ANC we have constantly raised these issues through our speeches, motions, and written and oral questions. We demand this Provincial Government to adopt an integrated approach, not just policing, but prevention, protection, participation and purpose. Young people, hon Deputy Speaker, need to be safe in safe spaces, and also they need job opportunities in the province. I thank you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Stoffel. I recognise the hon Stephens.

Ms D R STEPHENS (PA): Thank you. Hon Deputy Speaker, hon members of this House and the youth in the gallery. I rise today as a proud Patriotic

Alliance member to honour and reflect on Youth Day, a day that carries both a painful history and a powerful reminder of the bravery of South Africa's youth. Let us begin where it all started pre 1994. On 16 June 1976 thousands of young people took to the streets of Soweto to protest the injustices of the apartheid education system. Let us never forget that the youth of the era fought for freedom, for liberation and for a better life, not only for themselves, but for ... [Interjection]

An HON MEMBER: He was sitting on the roadside, he was there [Inaudible - background audio 0:17:53]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order members!

Ms D R STEPHENS (PA): But hon Deputy Speaker today in a democratic South Africa, 30 years into our constitutional democracy our youth is facing a different war. Post 1994 the fight was shifted. Today's struggle is not against apartheid laws; today's enemy is exclusion from opportunity, from access to education, from meaningful employment, from economic justice, and from funding for entrepreneurial dreams.

How is it that in 2025 millions of young people are sitting at home with degrees, diplomas and skills, but without jobs? It is sad to even voice how is it that in the Western Cape, a province with so much potential, our young people in townships and rural areas remain trapped in a cycle of poverty, gangsterism and drugs. How is it that bursaries and education funding are so



inaccessible, so politicised and so poorly administrated that deserving learners fall through the cracks year after year? It can never be right or acceptable, hon Deputy Speaker.

Hon Deputy Speaker, the Patriotic Alliance believes in real empowerment of our youth, not in slogans, not in empty campaigns once a year, but in tangible, practical and measurable outcomes. We must, and I emphasise “we must” prioritise skills development aligned to market needs, not just degrees for the sake of degrees. Open the economy to youth entrepreneurship by streaming funding, removing red tape and providing mentorship. Create public, private partnerships that guarantee internships and workplace experience for all graduates, and yes, we must clean up our municipalities and departments so that corruption does not rob the youth of the very opportunities they deserve.

Hon Deputy Speaker, today's youth are not lazy, they are resilient, they are resourceful, they are creative, they are ready to work, but they need a government that sees them, hears them and invest in them. Let Youth Day not be a symbolic commemoration only. Let it be a moment of reckoning, a call to action for this Government to stop treating youth issues as seasonal hashtags and start doing the real work of empowering our next generation. To the youth of 1976, we salute you. To the youth of today, we are with you in this new struggle. To this House, the time for speeches has passed; the time for action is now. [Interjection]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please conclude member.

Ms D R STEPHENS (PA): Rest empowered to those who died for freedom. Rise in power to those who will build our future. I thank you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Stephens. I recognise the hon Minister Londt.

The MINISTER OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker, Premier, members of the House, and to the youth that have joined us today, and those that are still young at heart. Today and throughout this month we remember the immense bravery of the youth of '76 who stood up to an unjust system, fighting for a future of dignity, opportunity and equity.

However the youth of today are facing different challenges, ones that also threaten their dignity. But in the Western Cape we are continuously working together as a Government to address this. As the Western Cape Department of Social Development we honour the young people by investing in their potential, especially the vulnerable youth who face poverty, abuse, substance use and marginalisation. Our commitment is not just in words, but it is a strategic targeted active intervention.

Just this past weekend we held a Provincial Youth Expo in partnership with the City of Cape Town that connected hundreds of youth to job opportunities, to pathways out of their circumstances. The past weekend was a spotlight on

all the services that we do provide as a Provincial Government, as the City, and elsewhere in the province. We do this throughout the year, and what we ask of the youth is to step up and take those opportunities.

I met some amazing young people that have benefited from DSD funded programmes, like Jaden Sayster, a young woman from Mitchells Plain. She started out as an intern in one of these DSD funded intern programmes in 2023. Two years later, Jaden is now in her first year studying chemical engineering and work for Alliance Française as a communications officer, and she says it is because of the resources and support she received from Blaqpearl that she got the opportunities to be where she is today.

Hon Deputy Speaker, our Department funds 12 youth cafes across the province that are providing this kind of support that Jaden received, such as digital literacy and academic support. During the 2024/2025 financial period just under 15 000 youth participated in training and mentoring programmes offered by community based organisations and youth cafes across the province. We also own and fund seven Secure Care Child and Youth Care Centres, for youth that are in conflict with the law and for those that pose behavioural challenges. We also fund 53 non-profit organisation CYCCs across the province for those in need of care and protection. The Department also subsidises 24 NPOs to work in communities where there are youth not in employment, education and or training.

These organisations provide skills training to young people, like Blaqpearl

that I mentioned earlier that walked the journey with Jaden. In the 2024/2025 financial year just over 750 000 sanitary pad packs were distributed to just over 300 schools and DSD CYCCs in the province to promote the well-being, health, dignity and self-esteem of female learners, but also to ensure that they do not miss any of the academic learning that they need to do so that they can fully invest in their future.

Hon Deputy Speaker, we cannot do this without partnerships. If you look at DSD CYCCs, our child and youth care workers are doing an incredible job to break the cycle of hardship and socio-economic challenges that brought the children to these facilities in the first place. Some programmes at these facilities are strengthened by volunteers, NGOs, and the private sector.

Earlier this year we signed a partnership with Africa Skills that is taking some of those youth that are in conflict with the law and serious behavioural challenges and teaching them the necessary skills to work for themselves, whether it is to become a mechanic, an electrician, or even do some plumbing. It is about building hope and it is about helping these young boys and girls to not only dream, but to work hard to create that better life for them and their families with the opportunities that we provide.

In these CYCCs we have seen our children who were in gangs light up in a woodwork class, how they are being able to use their hands to make something creative and beautiful. We have seen our girls with behavioural challenges have gone on to become dance teachers inspiring others that want

to follow in their footsteps. Our facilities have also become a place of best practises for other provinces to follow.

In April this year our Department hosted an interprovincial workshop on the cost of services for children with disruptive behavioural disorders. We took a group of officials from the National DSD and other provinces on a site visit to our facilities in the Western Cape, so that they can learn from our best practises and roll it out to the rest of the country.

Hon Deputy Speaker, we are doing a lot as a Department, but something that I want to finish off with, as I see my time has inexplicably run out quite quickly, to the youth, I really do not understand your fascination with social media, I really do not understand the dance moves, the TikToks, I do not understand the music that you listen to, but one thing that I can give you a commitment, is that we are working incredibly hard as a Provincial Government to give you every possible opportunity that you deserve to fulfil your own potential.

The DSD and the sister departments who work together, some of those provide economic opportunities, internships, and we are looking after the most vulnerable youth, but what we are asking of you is to also step up and take these opportunities. Do not just sit back and watch other people take it; you need to take ownership of your own life and let you be the youth, and then also work for the youth of 2030/2035 and beyond. Thank you so much.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Minister Londt. I recognise the hon Cassiem.

Ms A CASSIEM (EFF): Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. Hon Deputy Speaker, I would like to commence this debate by extending our heartfelt condolences, as the EFF, to the families of all those fighters who have lost their lives on 16 June, when the bus they were travelling in collided with a truck. This tragedy, hon Deputy Speaker, which took the lives of 10 fighters, with the youngest being only 17 years old, occurred while they were on their way from the EFF June 16 rally in KZN. As the EFF we pray for the families and we will remember these fighters who lost their lives while in the line of duty, fighting for economic emancipation.

Returning to the Order of the Day, hon Deputy Speaker, almost 49 years later, since the South African youth of 1976 took to the streets and died for the cause of a better education, better redistribution of land, and socio-economic emancipation, to date, hon Deputy Speaker, not much has been achieved due to the leadership vacuum in positions of power. Here in the Western Cape, African and Coloured learners are still largely and systematically denied access to schools with better facilities, which are mostly situated in leafy suburbs.

Township schools remain abandoned and not upgraded, while the school admission system continues to remain skewed favouring White learners over other racial groups in this province. Hon Deputy Speaker, the reality is that

what Black youth are experiencing today is just a repeat of what our youth experienced during apartheid. Our youth today remain largely unemployed and as a result of the current socio-economic environment denying our youth with access to key resources, including access to land for economic use, and they remain idle resorting to all sorts of criminal activity, as well as the abuse of alcohol and substance abuse.

Hon Deputy Speaker, a youth deprived of opportunities systematically, and in most cases become a problematic youth for the society, since they have ample time on their hands, which they are denied by the system to use it productively and for positive good, or use rather. Hon Deputy Speaker, as our youth are held hostage in drug and gang infested communities across the province, especially on the Cape Flats, among other communities, with little or no intervention.

We call on our youth of today to rise and to take to the streets to hold those responsible for our safety, to account, as they fail to eradicate drug and gang activity, which to date has taken the lives of many youth. Hon Deputy Speaker, provincial and municipal land must also be made available to those who want to farm or use the land productively for economic gains so that they can create employment opportunities in turn.

But in conclusion, hon Deputy Speaker, as we call for better opportunities for the youth, let us also call on our youth to be on the forefront of fighting crime, unemployment, drugs and gangsterism, among other issues affecting

our communities, especially in our Coloured and African communities, and to continue the legacy of those who came before us and who risked their lives to fight for a system that does not benefit the Black child. Let us rise as youth and continue the fight for better opportunities. Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Cassiem. I recognise the hon Johnson.

Mr P JOHNSON (DA): Hon Deputy Speaker, Youth Day is a reminder of the price that was paid for freedom. In 1976 young people stood up against the system designed to keep them silent. They marched, they resisted and many lost their lives, all for the right to learn and the right to be heard. Today, almost 50 years later, the youth of South Africa face a different kind of struggle, the fight is not against banned books or racist policies, but it is against an economy that is shutting them out. It is a fight for jobs, it is a fight for dignity and it is a fight for the future.

The numbers from the latest Quarterly Labour Force Survey make this painfully clear. Among young South Africans aged 15 to 24, the official unemployment rate now stands at 62%. Among those aged 25 to 34 it is over 40%. More than four in 10 young people between the ages of 15 and 34 are not employed, in education or in training. The picture is even worse for young women. Close to half of all young women in these age groups are completely locked out of the economy.



Hon Deputy Speaker, many of our young people have never had a job at all. Nearly 60% of unemployed youth have no previous work experience, and without previous work experience you cannot be hired, and without getting hired you cannot gain the experience needed. It is a vicious cycle that fuels long-term unemployment and work discouragement. Hon Deputy Speaker, in this climate, how can we blame young people for being discouraged from seeking work?

The job market is grim, young applicants send out dozens of CVs and hear nothing back. They are ghosted by employers, strung along for months or told that they lack experience. Across South Africa discouragement is rising. Over the last year 425 000 South Africans became discouraged work seekers, people who have simply given up on the hope of finding a job. This is not laziness, it is despair and it should be ringing alarm bells. When the next generation gives up hope, the future of our country is in danger.

Hon Deputy Speaker, we cannot talk about youth empowerment without talking about economic access and we cannot solve youth unemployment by doing more of the very same thing. While other provinces have seen discouragement deepen, the Western Cape is moving in the opposite direction. Over the past quarter alone the number of people who are economically active in our province dropped by 42 000, that means more people are actively entering the labour force, looking for work and finding jobs.

In the first quarter of this year, the country lost over 290 000 jobs, but here in the Western Cape we have created 49 000 new jobs, the largest gain of any province in the country. Our official unemployment rate is just 19,6%, well below the national average of 32,9%. Our expanded unemployment rate is also the lowest in the country and our labour force participation is the highest. This is not a coincidence, it is a result of a government that has the plan and that sticks to the very plan. Our Growth for Jobs strategy is a serious evidence based road map. It targets high growth sectors where young people are most likely to find opportunities, sectors like manufacturing, agriculture, finance and technology.

Look at the numbers, hon Deputy Speaker, R31 billion is being spent on critical infrastructure over the MTEF. R45 million is being spent to help cut red tape so that it is easier to do business; and R382 million to add 17 new energy projects to the province so that we can keep the lights on. The facts simply do not lie; we are the only province that is serious about tackling this problem. Hon Deputy Speaker, here in the Western Cape we are doing the work, we are building an economy that includes young people, not just with slogans or broken promises like the rest, but with real interventions and measurable results.

Over the past year I keep hearing some of the same talking points from the Opposition, that the DA only cares about certain leafy suburbs in Cape Town, but this is simply not true. Per capita spending in rural areas like the Karoo

is 34% higher than the provincial average. Jobs are being created in areas like Atlantis and Khayelitsha, because we enable a climate for entrepreneurship and employment. Metrics like the province's Gini coefficient and Human Development Index are the best in the country. Here in the Western Cape we are bucking the trend, we are focusing on one thing that should take top priority in this country – that is getting people into jobs.

†Agb Adjunkspeaker, ander provinsies moet kennis neem, die Wes-Kaap presteer nie net beter nie, ons bewys dat 'n ander benadering moontlik is en dat dit werk. Ons is 'n werkende model van wat nodig is om die gety te keer en ons nooi die res van Suid Afrika uit om mooi te kyk wat ons hier doen in hierdie provinsie. Die Wes-Kaap kan en behoort gebruik te word as 'n model om die jeugwerkloosheidskrisis aan te pak, want ons is die enigste provinsie wat hierdie uitdaging ernstig opneem. Agb Adjunkspeaker, ter herdenking van Jeugdag, kom ons verbind ons weer daartoe om daardie toekoms saam te bou, 'n toekoms waar elke jong Suid Afrikaner, ongeag hulle geslag, agtergrond of gemeenskap, 'n regverdige kans het. Baie dankie.

[Hon Deputy Speaker, other provinces should take note, the Western Cape not only performs better, we prove that a different approach is possible and that it works. We are a working model of what is required to turn around the tide and we invite the rest of South Africa to carefully look at what we do here in this province. The Western Cape can and should be used as a model to tackle the youth unemployment crisis, because we are the only province who takes this problem seriously. Hon Deputy Speaker, in commemoration of Youth Day, let us commit ourselves again to build that future together, a future

where every young South African, irrespective of gender, background or community, has a fair opportunity. Thank you.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Johnson, I recognise the hon Marais.

Mr G P MARAIS (FFP): Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. Hon Deputy Speaker, for as long as the education system denies children

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Johnson. I recognise the hon Marais.

Mr G P MARAIS (FFP): Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. Hon Deputy Speaker, for as long as the education system denies children timeous placement in a classroom that is not overcrowded, we must accept that our Government has failed the youth once again. This was the reality in 1976. There were overcrowded classrooms, poor quality education. Every year in the Western Cape, we have unplaced learners in excess of 10 000 at a time before the start of the new year. What is the difference today?

For as long as we allow children to drop out of the education system by the age of 15 and leave without a basic standard of vocational training in skills development, we will not succeed in improving the quality of their lives, hon Deputy Speaker. We must improve the employability of our youth, especially for the Fourth and Fifth Industrial Revolution.

The Freedom Front Plus supports mother tongue education which should never be denied to any child in South Africa. The youth of 1976 did not hate Afrikaans. They hated the system that forced them to learn in Afrikaans as a medium of instruction. They were never consulted. This led to the hatred for Afrikaans as they called it, the ‘oppressor’s language’, but that is how it was branded. This was a great injustice to the youth of 1976 and a great injustice to Afrikaans.

The lack of public trust in the South African Police renders the youth vulnerable to joining gangs, hon Deputy Speaker. This has left many young people living in dangerous neighbourhoods unwilling to report crime, unwilling to report their vulnerable predicament. At the end of it all, they end up in prison. We call that the youths’ voices be heard in this Parliament, hon Deputy Speaker, that they will come to this House and speak for themselves. Let us hear them speak and raise their concerns. That is what I suggest. Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. ...[Applause.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Marais. [Interjections.]

An HON MEMBER: You must invite some young people. [Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, hon members. I am wanting to engage the Table Staff. [Interjections.] I note that the following speaker is not online. I see ...[Interjections.] Hon members, I recognise the hon Brinkhuis.

Mr G BRINKHUIS (AL JAMA-AH): Thank you very much, hon Deputy Speaker. *Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim*. Hon Deputy Speaker, the Al Jama-ah party is committed to the fight for dignity, justice and meaningful economic inclusion of our youth. The youth, particularly those from the previously oppressed and exploited masses during apartheid, South Africa continues to carry a heavy historical weight.

Apartheid did not just take our land. It broke our economies. Townships were never meant to thrive. They were designed to restrict what we see today. Generational poverty, youth unemployment, lack of access to land and capital is a direct result of that engineered exclusion. These are not just inherited problems, they are political realities we must dismantle.

While we fight for inclusion, we are also fighting for survival. In the Western Cape there are more drug dens than schools. Gangsterism and Gender-Based Violence are destroying our youth. Women and children are most vulnerable. They have nowhere safe to turn to. Our places of safety are underfunded and overcrowded. In this DA-run province, there are thousands of youth living on farms facing evictions. There are youth living in dwellings where no emergency vehicles can access them. They are youth who once finished with high school and are now facing the trauma of being barred from living with his or her parents on the farms.

How can we talk about youth economic participation when our children are

being recruited by gangs, when trauma, addiction and fear become the norm? Sadly, there is an increase in children as young as 12 ...[Interjection.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please conclude, hon member.

Mr G BRINKHUIS (AL JAMA-AH): ...being recruited into gangs. They are exploited as drug couriers and decoys. I thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. Thank you very much. ...[Applause.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Brinkhuis. I recognise the hon Wessels.

Mr D J WESSELS (DA): Hon Deputy Speaker, hon members and the young people of this province. Youth Day is a reminder of the courage shown by this 1976 generation, those who stood up against the injustices with a determination and a vision for a better future. Their defiance helped shape our democracy and a part of their legacy is our privilege to rise in this House and commemorate Youth Day.

Honouring that legacy requires more than just a commemoration. It demands action, the kind that creates real measurable opportunities. Today's youth face urgent challenges securing work, accessing education and building a life that they can be proud of. These are not just distant issues, but a daily reality. In the Western Cape, under the DA-led Government, we are tackling this head-on.

†Adjunkspeaker, laat my toe om die storie te deel van Demi Goeieman, 'n jong dame van Mosselbaai wie persoonlike struikelblokke oorkom het. Nadat sy haar onbevredigende werk bedank het, het sy haar kinderliefde vir meetkunde herontdek en vir houtwerk ingeskryf by Africa Skills, danksy die ondersteuning van die Wes-Kaapse regering. Sonder enige vorige ondervinding, het sy 'n klasleier geword en later, assistentbestuurder. Houtwerk het haar selfvertroue herstel en 'n toekoms gegee. Haar storie is nie 'n uitsondering nie, dit is die motivering van wat moontlik is wanneer daar in jong mense belê word.

[Deputy Speaker, allow me to share the story of Demi Goeieman, a young lady of Mossel Bay who had overcome personal obstacles. After she had resigned from her unsatisfactory work, she rediscovered her love for geometry and enrolled for woodwork at Africa Skills, thanks to the support of the Western Cape Government. Without any previous experience she became a class leader and later, assistant manager. Woodwork restored her confidence and gave her a future. Her story is not an exception, it is the motivation of what is possible when the youth are invested in.]

Hon Deputy Speaker, infrastructure is not just roads and buildings. It is the ladder for opportunity, a tool to unlock potential and a foundation for careers. This belief is more than a theory, but is backed by budgets, plans and results. Hon Deputy Speaker, hon member Stoffel asked, 'Where, where, where?' The DA-run Western Cape says: Here! Here! Here!



Here is where this year 40 bursaries have been awarded through the Masakh'iSizwe programme for studies in Engineering and Built Environment. Here is where another 40 graduates are placed in professional development programmes, gaining work experience and mentorship to become registered professionals. It is here where 500 young people will be trained in construction and artisan skills in the coming year, earning a wage and gaining lifelong skills through the EPWP Programme.

It is here where we also help youth-run businesses. Through the Contractor Development Programme, we provide mentorship and support to get young entrepreneurs tender ready. Hon Deputy Speaker, this year four more initiatives target youth, women and people with disabilities to grow inclusive participation in construction. Backing all of this is over R55 million allocated this year to empowerment and skills development. This is not a Youth Month promise, but a budgeted reality.

†Die ekonomiese impak is duidelik. In die afgelope paar jaar het meer as R189 miljoen van infrastruktuur-projekte na kleinsake gevloei. Dit sluit die besighede met jong mense as eienaars van meer as 2 000 projekte in. Dit is moontlik gemaak deur 13 diensverskaffer-sessies, maandeliks die EPWP-sessies en ook die aanlyn aankoopplatform. Alles wat verseker dat jong mense toegang het tot werksgeleenthede.

[The economic impact is clear. In the past few years more than R189 million of infrastructure projects flowed to small business. It includes the businesses with young people as owners of more than 2 000 projects. It was made

possible by 13 service provider sessions, monthly the EPWP sessions and also the online buying platform. All that ensure that young people have access to job opportunities.]

Hon Deputy Speaker, this is not a charity, this is justice. Young people do not want handouts. They want a fair chance. In the Western Cape, we are building that chance into every project that we will deliver.

†Aan elke jong mens in die Wes-Kaap: jou stem maak saak. Jou vaardighede maak saak en jou toekoms is die moete werd om in te belê. [To every young person in the Western Cape: your voice matters. Your skills matter and your future is worth investing in.]

Let this Youth Month not be a moment of remembrance alone, but a moment of momentum, a signal that your Province believes in you and is walking the path of opportunity with you. Let us build that future together. Thank you very much. ...[Applause.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Wessels. I recognise the hon Christians.

Mr F C CHRISTIANS (ACDP): Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. Hon Deputy Speaker, the Greek philosopher, Aristotle, said the following:

“The young people of today think of nothing, but themselves. They have

no reverence for parents or old age. They are impatient of all restraint. They talk as if they knew everything, and what passes for wisdom with us is foolishness with them.”

That, he wrote more than 1 700 years ago. But hon Deputy Speaker, the Apostle Paul wrote to the young Timothy, and he said to him:

“Let no one despise you your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, and in purity.”

Two opposing examples. One of personal experience and the other one guides the youth how to live.

Hon Deputy Speaker, we also think of the language the youth is using, and I want to say that Thomas Edison, the inventor of the light bulb, used a different kind of language. We know that he failed more than 1 000 times to invent the light bulb, but he did not use the words ‘I am defeated, I am a failure.’ He said, ‘I found 1 000 ways that it will not work’ and he continued.

I want to encourage our youth. That is the type of language we must use. We must use the language that the Apostle Paul when encouraging Timothy said:

“Do not let people despise you your youth.”

Check your conduct, check your speech, but everything you do, do it in love. Do it in faith and do it in purity.

Hon Deputy Speaker, I think that is the message for the youth. Be optimistic for the future because your future is in your hands. I thank you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Christians. I recognise the hon Lekker.

Ms P Z LEKKER (ANC): Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. Hon Deputy Speaker, on Monday we celebrated Youth Day as a country and while we celebrated the contribution the youth have played in the country, as the African National Congress, we want to ensure that the youth have equal opportunities in the province.

From our perspective, Black and Coloured young people have been systematically excluded from the formal economy of this province. It is a painful truth that in a province that boasts about economic growth, tourism success and global investment, the youth who make up the majority, the Black and the Coloured youth, remain on the outside looking in.

We raised this during the budget period. The Provincial Budget does not reflect a commitment to youth inclusion. Grants for youth entrepreneurship are underfunded. Skills hubs are poorly resourced and partnerships with the private sector favour boardrooms in the CBD, while ignoring the potential

that lies in township economies.

As the African National Congress, we demand that this Government builds economic inclusion where it matters and that is in the townships, in rural villages, in working class communities. We want to see funding for youth owned businesses. Hon member Stoffel highlights the MEET in the province. This brings skills centres closer to the people.

Hon Deputy Speaker, we have been highlighting the systematic exclusion of Black and Coloured young people in the formal economy. Earlier this year, President Cyril Ramaphosa emphasised the importance for the Government to prioritise the youth, women and people living with disabilities in awarding contracts and in doing business. When you look at this province, that call fell on deaf ears.

The DA is part of the GNU and the governing party in this province. They have a duty to implement policies such as the Medium-Term Development Plan that encourages economic inclusion as a manner to boost the economy and ensure that each and every South African has access to our economy. In smaller municipalities such as Laingsburg, Beaufort West, Matzikama, Kannaland and Swellendam, the conditions tell a different story. In these areas, youth unemployment is not just a statistic. It is a harsh reality made worse by isolation and underdevelopment, exclusion from land and economic opportunities.

Many young people in rural areas want to work the land. They want to be part of the Western Cape's agricultural economy. They want to start growing food to feed their communities, to create jobs. But what stands in their way: land, access, support ...[Interjections.], opportunities and unfortunately, this Government has failed them on all four.

Hon Deputy Speaker, our young people given the opportunity are able. We need to ensure that there is equal opportunity. Equal opportunity in education, training, funding and in business. If the DA Government was serious about economic inclusion, it would release the land, equip youth with tools, invest in rural and township economies, and make farming accessible to the young and landless. [Interjections.]

What we are currently seeing, hon Deputy Speaker, is far from this. We are seeing a government prioritising policing rather than looking at the root causes of crime and violence in those areas. I repeat: this Government prioritises policing, rather than looking at the root causes of crime and violence in the province. It is easy to implement reactionary programmes in an attempt to root out crime. [Interjections.] The real work is in investment, investment in the structural causes of crime, investment in youth initiatives that take the youth off the streets and initiatives that are sustainable.

We are not interested in tick box programmes or exercises. These initiatives must be sustainable and be able to replicate across the province, and not just in Cape Town. [Interjections.]

Hon Deputy Speaker, the Western Cape has a Youth Development Strategy adopted in 2013. If we are being honest, that strategy is outdated. The Western Cape has to engage the youth to develop a new development strategy that is centred on youth inclusion in the economy. When we talk about challenges facing the youth, we have to speak beyond unemployment and that is why the African National Congress wants to see a generation of young people involved in owning big stakes in our economy.

This is something we will continue to raise in this House until we see a genuine effort from this Government to open the economy for our youth, and not close down doors and keep quiet while sitting on the wrong side of the community whilst our people, our children, are killed daily in Hanover Park, Manenberg, Bishop Lavis, Nyanga, Lower Crossroads, Philippi East, Witzenberg, Kwanonqubela, Kwamandlake, including in Ashton.

Therefore, hon Deputy Speaker, as the African National Congress was saying open the doors for young people to be equipped with vocational skills so that they are able to better equip themselves ...[Interjections.] and the economy with the people of the Western Cape at large. I thank you. ...[Applause.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Lekker. I recognise the hon Minister Baartman.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE: Thank you, hon ...[Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Order, hon members. To conclude the debate, potentially one of the youngest hon MECs in the entire country. [Interjections.] So, let us allow the hon Minister ...[Interjections.] Let us allow the hon Minister to conclude the debate. ...[Applause.] You may proceed, hon Minister. ...[Applause.]

The MINISTER OF FINANCE: Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. ...[Interjection.]

An HON MEMBER: Listen to youth!

The MINISTER OF FINANCE: To the youth in the gallery today, to the only other youth ...[Interjection.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Minister ...[Interjection.]

The MINISTER OF FINANCE: ...myself in the ...[Interjection.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please take your seat.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE: ...and to those who are younger than ...[Interjection.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Minister, please take your seat. Hon Chief



Whip.

The CHIEF WHIP (DA): Hon Deputy Speaker, I would like the hon Windvogel, through you, to withdraw the comment that she just made towards hon Minister Baartman, referring to hon Minister Baartman as an ‘old cow’.

Hon MEMBERS: No, that is shocking! Withdraw, withdraw! [Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon ...[Interjections.] Hon members! [Interjections.]

An HON MEMBER: Windvogel, no! Shocking! [Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon members! [Interjections.] We have over 80. We have over 80 young people from across our province that could potentially fill these seats in the future. How we behave now could either encourage or discourage the young people of ever entering politics. I have not personally heard the comment that the Chief Whip has referred to. [Interjections.] I will consult Hansard and if necessary, revert back to the House ...[Interjections.]

Hon member Windvogel, before I consult Hansard ...[Interjections.] before I consult Hansard, let me ask you if you echoed the words that the Chief Whip indicated earlier.

Ms R WINDVOGEL (ANC): It was the discussion between me and the hon member on the other side, not the hon Minister. [Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: It would still be unparliamentary and I would ask you to withdraw.

Ms R WINDVOGEL (ANC): Withdraw because I call him an old cow? ...[Interjection.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon member Windvogel, if you are able to stand. [Interjections.] Hon members! I am on the floor. Are you able to withdraw unreservedly and not make additional comments?

Ms R WINDVOGEL (ANC): I withdraw.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you.

Ms R WINDVOGEL (ANC): Call him an old cow. [Interjections.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon member Windvogel! That is not how we withdraw. [Interjections.] That is all I need from you. The comment has been withdrawn. [Interjections.] Hon members, the young people are eagerly anticipating to hear what the hon Minister has to say. [Interjections.] Hon Minister, please proceed.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE: Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. [Interjections.] I am honoured to participate in today's debate as one of the only two youths elected to this Western Cape Provincial Parliament. As the youngest Minister ever appointed in the Western Cape Government history, ...[Interjections.] in a House chaired by the youngest ever elected Speaker of the Western Cape Provincial Parliament, the hon Speaker Daylin Mitchell. [Interjections.]

The 1976 generation not only rejected the oppression and atrocities meted out by the apartheid regime, but they also demanded freedom, justice and dignity. Today, it is our responsibility to honour and carry their legacy forward and to build a South Africa where the lives of our youth are dignified and abundant with opportunities.

Unemployment remains the single biggest challenge facing South African youth today. Joblessness threatens their futures, robs them of their dignity and traps them in a vicious cycle of poverty. There is evidence from inputs today even that we all agree that youth unemployment is a challenge we must confront.

Hon Deputy Speaker, the Western Cape Government has been proactive in addressing this challenge. Our goal is to create a R1 trillion economy by 2035, growing at 4% to 6% annually and creating 600 000 jobs. Yes, these are ambitious goals, but if we are not prepared to be bold now then we risk failing not only the youth of today, but also the youth of 1976 who showed us

that any mountain can be conquered when you have the courage to try.

Today, the Western Cape has the lowest unemployment rate in the country. According to the most recent Quarterly Labour Force Survey, the provincial unemployment rate stands at 19,6% in Quarter 1 of 2025 and at 33,26% the Western Cape also has the lowest NEET rate in the country. For comparison, the national rate is 45,64%. More than that, the Western Cape also boasts the highest labour market absorption rate in South Africa. This means that in the province, if you are looking for a job, you are far more likely to find one.

But we recognise that this may not be the lived experience for every young person in the province. We acknowledge that economic empowerment and access to opportunities are still concepts that are not a reality for many of our young people. This is why the Western Cape Government will be spending R43,8 billion over the next three financial years on its Growth for Jobs strategy to help businesses grow and create jobs and equip the youth of our Western Cape to get those jobs.

We will spend almost R4 billion on Safety and 80% of our total budget will go to Education, Health, Social Development and Housing. ...[Applause.] Our investment in young people begins long before you can even walk. The Department of Health and Wellness's first 1 000 Days Initiative promotes the health, nutrition and development of children from conception to the age of two. We want you to have a strong foundation and a long life.

The Western Cape Education Department by the National School Nutrition Programme provides more than 537 000 learners at 1 055 schools nutritious meals every day, ensuring that they have nourishment needed to support their growing bodies and minds. Additionally, approximately 69 000 learners benefit from scholar transport daily, improving access to education across the province. Over the past five years, the Western Cape has seen a notable improvement in learner retention for both primary and high school, indicating a decline in dropout rates and an increasing number of learners completing their education.

Hon Deputy Speaker, the Western Cape Government is not only creating a province where job creation can thrive. We are also proactively creating direct pathways into the economy for young people with programmes such as the Premier's Advancement for Youth Programme, which provides matriculants with valuable first-work experience within the Western Cape Government, helping to build skills and confidence early in their careers.

Through the Work and Skills Programme and the Artisan Development Programme, the Department of Economic Development and Tourism equips young people with practical on-the-job training in high demand sectors. The Department of Mobility is rolling out travel vouchers to help you get to your job interview so that you can get that job.

To address critical skills shortages in fields like Engineering and the Built Environment, infrastructure is investing in the next generation of our

technical professionals through the Masakh'iSizwe bursary programme. Agriculture will be investing more money into our agricultural training and education in the province. The Year Beyond Programme reaches over 3 000 young people each year with specific focus on those who are not in education, employment or training offering them a structured service, training and pathways to further study and work.

Environmental Affairs and Development Planning will implement their Township Strategy to help support rural economies. At our Youth Cafes, the Department of Social Development will provide holistic support including digital literacy, personal development and vital employment skills. The Department of Arts and Culture will have 315 MOD Programme Centres by the end of this financial year, up from 180.

We will also support our Minister Solly Malatsi in the GNU National Cabinet in his fight to make sure that South African TikTok creators get paid for the content they create. †Dit is ons *se intellectual property* [It is our intellectual property.] ...[Applause.] You deserve to be paid for the work you created. †Dit is jou geld. [It is your money.] We will fight for that.

Hon Deputy Speaker, this is all possible because we take our responsibilities seriously and because we believe that every young person in this province deserves an opportunity. As the Western Cape Government, we will continue to step up, to invest in and to support young people of this province. Let us take hands today and commit that we will help create an environment and

opportunities as a government. But you, as the youth, we must step up and grab these opportunities so that perhaps, just perhaps, the next youngest in history might be amongst the gallery with us here today. Hon Deputy Speaker, I thank you. ...[Applause.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon members, that concludes the Speaker's Debate. Before we conclude the business, let me again express my thanks to councillor Poggenpoel and to all the young people that even earlier, together with the Chief Whip, engaged our public outreach and education programme.

Hon members, I can confirm that even the questions that were posed by the young people are a clear indication that many of them might be coming for the seats that we are currently occupying. ...[Applause.] So, I wish you all of the best and once again, thank you.

Hon members, that concludes the business of the day. The Secretary will now end the meeting and adjourn all hon members from the platform.

The House adjourned at 15:15.