

**Keynote Address to the Annual SAYNPS Nuclear Youth Summit
Ambassador Thembisile Majola (MP), Deputy Minister of Energy
Jeffreys Bay, Eastern Cape, 11 October 2017.**

Programme Director

SAYNPS Executive Chairperson Mr Gaopalelwe Santswere

The MMC for Local Economic Development, Cllr Bryan Dhludhlu

Our Permanent Representative to the International Atomic Energy Agency, Ambassador Tebogo Seokolo

Our special guest from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Ms Kate Rojkov

The residents of Kouga, particularly the young students and the Youth Members of SAYNPS

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am pleased to be here with you in Jeffreys Bay to be part of this strategic and visionary conference. A special word of thanks goes to the South African Young Nuclear Professionals Society for inviting me to the Summit and to allow me to deliver my remarks this morning.

This being my first interaction with SAYNPS let me take this opportunity to commend you for establishing an organisation that truly serves as a “home” for young nuclear professionals in our country. Indeed since your formation in 2006 you have actively championed the interests of all young professionals in the nuclear sector, not only influencing debates on the benefits of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, but also practically providing a pool of dedicated practitioners in the entire nuclear value chain in our country. SAYNPS has been an ardent advocate for youth skills development, preservation and propagation of nuclear knowledge, expertise and its application.

Programme Director,

It is significant that this Summit is taking place in this Province of the Eastern Cape. This Province has traditionally been a thriving hub for the automotive sector. However, most recently the Province has been diversifying into other sectors such as infrastructure development as well as gearing itself to taking advantage of the enormous potential in the ocean economy, such as oil rig maintenance; aquaculture and expansion of port facilities.

However, without access to affordable, sustainable and reliable energy, all these positive developments will not be fully realised. It is in this context that our Government has created conducive and enabling environment that has attracted massive investments in the renewable energy sector, with the Eastern Cape Province leading in the field of wind energy.

Our country needs to take urgent action in order to ensure security of supply for the country for the next 20 years. The integrated Resource Plan (IRP) sets out a path for South Africa's long term energy future introducing new players and diversifying sources of energy. Importantly, the IRP envisages a balanced energy mix with nuclear as an integral part of our baseload, as is the case currently.

The Eastern Cape Province, and Thyspunt specifically, is a possible site for the envisaged nuclear expansion programme. This development will serve as a catalyst for major growth of the economy of the Province. In order to harness and optimise the benefit of this programme, we would require a sustained supply of skilled workforce across a broad spectrum of expertise in various engineering fields, technical and social sciences, artisans and technicians amongst others. This will create massive possibilities for this region to be a hub for research and development, innovation, technology development, training and skills transfer. Needless to say this would be a major boost for the development of local business and employment opportunities.

Programme Director,

This SAYNPS Annual Summit takes place at an opportune time in our country when unemployment especially amongst the young people is at its highest. Many of the unemployed young people lack the skills required by the knowledge economy. With the advent of the fourth industrial revolution, there is a need for the youth to acquire the requisite skills, expertise and experience so as to be able to contribute effectively to the development and growth of the economy of our country. As the late president of the ANC OR Tambo said: *“The Children of any nation are its future. A country, a movement, a person that does not value its youth and children does not deserve its future”*.

As I conclude may I invite to ponder on the following matters:

Firstly, what is the role of SAYNPS in facilitating and enabling the youth in meaningfully participating in the nuclear sector;

Secondly, how does SAYNPS leverage international partnerships for the benefit of the youth of South Africa.

I hope that during this Summit you will find an opportunity to reflect and exchange views on these and other important matters that face the youth of our country. I hope you will take advantage of the attendance of the presence of the Director of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) as well as our Representative to the IAEA.

I would like to leave you all with some food for thought. We all know the generation of the young leaders from the 1930s who have dominated our political lives for over six decades amongst them Anton lemede, Yusuf Dadoo, Albertina Sisulu, Walter sisulu, Lillian Ngoyi, Ray Alexander and Nelson Mandela amongst others. These leaders changed the face of the national liberation struggle. These leaders were followed by the generation of the 1970s such as Steve Biko and Rick Turner who inspired multitudes of young people to play an active role in the Durban strikes of 1973 and student uprisings of 1976, events that brought about the changes that led to our freedom.

What is common about these leaders that are from different generations, and at different times is education. Many of them received education at a time when education was not necessarily considered a key to a better life. Yet the parents of these young people had the foresight to invest in

the education of their children. They had already grasped the fact that the times had changed, and that their traditional ways of living had been affected irreversibly, and that their children's successes in futures would largely influenced by their level of education and skills. I am therefore confident that with the educational opportunities and possibilities that you have access to today, many of you will play significant leadership roles in our society tomorrow and help shape your own destiny. I leave this meeting confident that our goal of a secure energy future is in good hands.

Unlike during my student and youth days, the sky is not the limit for you – it is just the beginning! There are opportunities out there for those who are curious, who are thirsty for knowledge, who believe that they can make a positive contribution to our country, our continent and the world. I urge you to grab these opportunities and be trailblazers. As OR Tambo said: 'The future belongs to the Youth of our country.' Take responsibility for that future.

I thank you.