

Achieve

ISSUE 12 July 2011

LEADERS IN CLOSING THE SKILLS GAP

New strategy demands new structures

Revolutionising the youth agenda



merSETA
MANUFACTURING, ENGINEERING
AND RELATED SERVICES SETA
ISO 9001:2008

Vision

leaders in closing the skills gap

Mission

to facilitate sustainable
development of skills, transformation
and accelerate growth in manufacturing,
engineering and related services



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ON THE COVER

Dr Raymond Patel
merSETA CEO



PG. 12

merSETA - revolutionising the youth agenda



PG. 16

Transformation needed in motor industry



PG. 24

merSETA Bursary Scheme at the cutting edge

Contents

ACHIEVE ISSUE 12 JULY 2011

SETA NEWS

- 4 Talking notes
- 5 A view from the top
- 6 SETA Forum Statement

FEATURES

- 7 New strategy demands new structures
- 11 Plastics Industry and Partners Offer an Opportunity of Lifetime
- 12 merSETA - revolutionising the youth agenda
- 16 Transformation needed in motor industry

PROJECTS

- 20 The Sector Skills Plan - Perspective on Global Economy

SUCCESS STORIES

- 23 Hardwork and Fortitude Pay Off
- 24 merSETA Bursary Scheme at the cutting edge
- 26 Disable people prove their worth
- 28 Northern Cape Department of Education and merSETA boost car repair training

EVENTS

- 29 Women Empowerment - Bridging the Gap
- 30 New Trade Test Centre Opened in Free State
- 32 merSETA - spearheading the crusade of career guidance
- 34 Events of the quarter

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TalkingNotes

The month of June is not only politically historic, but is also important for focusing on the youth and the skills agenda. It has been 35 years since young people protested against the use of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction. Since then, we have made major strides in accelerating youth development through skills training and other initiatives since the advent of our democracy in 1994.

However, young people are still faced with serious challenges -- topping the list being unemployment. According to a survey conducted by the South African Institute of Race Relations, the unemployment rate among 15 to 24 year-olds is 51 percent, more than twice the national unemployment rate of 25 percent.

The survey stated further that employment has fallen by more than 20 percent since December 2008. Some of the causes are the shortage of skills and the lack of experience amongst young people.

In addressing this peculiar challenge, the Government has responded by introducing the New Growth Path that calls on the State to provide bold, imaginative and effective strategies to create millions of new jobs in the country.

According to a National Treasury discussion paper for public comment, this also requires civil society to take a proactive interest in addressing the problems presented by unemployment. To this end, the outcomes-based approach adopted by government identifies the need to develop a multi-pronged strategy to tackle youth unemployment.

Young people are the future of this country and failing to address the challenge of unemployment will spell a bleak future for them.

As a SETA and big business, we have an important role to play. There's a chronic skills shortage and we owe it to ourselves to lure more young people into our sector by offering bursaries and opportunities such as learnerships and apprenticeships.

The bleak future facing our young people is a clear indication of not having done enough in absorbing them into our different programmes.

In this quarter, we pull out all stops to bring about the

best in your SETA news. We have an exclusive interview with our CEO, Dr Raymond Patel. He shares his views on NSDS III and how merSETA will respond to the targets set out in the strategy.

Deputy President of the country Mr Kgalema Motlanthe addressed the Automechanika executive round table in Nasrec, Johannesburg, where he reiterated the importance of partnerships between government, labour, business and other role players in job creation.

Professor Salim Akoojee, from our Research and Development Unit, unpacks the Sector Skills Plan. We also focus on the Plastics Federation of South Africa which contributes immensely to skills development through their programmes.

As merSETA, we believe a paradigm shift is required to ensure young people are a solution rather than the problem to challenges facing the nation. Let us work tirelessly to ensure them a place in the sun.

Be blessed!



Sibongiseni
Ziinjiva Ka-Mnguni
Editor



A view FROM THE TOP

Since the start of this financial year, the SETA landscape has undergone major changes, with a reduction in the number of education and training authorities to 21 as well as new Governing Boards and chairpersons.

We take this opportunity, therefore, to welcome our new Board and its chairperson, Ms Phindile Nzimande. In our interaction in the past three months, we have ascertained a profound eagerness by new members to ensure we deal a death blow to the scarce and critical skills environment that hinders our country from progressing to its full potential.

The new stakeholder representative body is also clear in its support of the National Skills Development Strategy III which now focuses on the impact of our post-school training programmes as opposed to merely reaching training targets.

We know that the new Board will approach its tasks with the necessary zeal and diligence required to effect further change in the training landscape.

Welcome! as we settle down to what the SETAs were created for – enhancing skills development across all sectors of our economy – all indications are that the 2010/11 financial year has been a tremendous success for merSETA.

Initial.

Evaluations of our performance show that we have exceeded the previous year's targets. It took sheer determination and a common vision to pull all stakeholders – internal and external – together in the face of anxiety over the direction of the SETAs.

When Minister of Higher Education and Training Dr Blade Nzimande announced that the SETAs' life span would be extended for a further five years beginning 2011, we breathed a collective sigh of relief as it became clear that Government has confidence in our mandate. However, we were anxious on the future realignment of the authorities. We knew that mergers would have to take place as there

was often duplication in the segments we served.

In the run-up to the official announcement, great anxiety existed among staff and stakeholders on our future, given that nothing was certain.

In the event, merSETA had to shed the Fuel Retailers Association to the Wholesale & Retail SETA. With it went a small portion of our levy. But merSETA came out of the exercise enhanced, with a clear mandate to blaze the post-school training trail afresh.

This is what we are now doing. We have created and improvised our strategies to take account of the new skills development horizon. We have a new Board with fresh expertise. And staff anxiety has gone out the window. We are ready for the challenges.



Dr R Patel
merSETA
Chief Executive Officer.



SETA FORUM STATEMENT

The SETA Forum, comprising the country's 21 Sectoral Education and Training Authorities, has reaffirmed its commitment to effecting fundamental changes to skills training and upgrading in industry. At the same time, the SETAs drew a line between themselves and the Services SETA, charging that any legal challenges against the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) were a hindrance to progress.

This emerged at a meeting in Johannesburg where the 21 SETA representatives and the Department of Higher Education and Training met. The forum comprises both the SETAs and the DHET.

“Crucially, we recognise the role and place of the SETA system in the ongoing efforts to fight unemployment and expand our skills base to promote growth and development in our country,” said a joint statement by the two parties.

Department of Higher Education and Training DHET Minister Dr Blade Nzimande earlier this year realigned the SETA system, merged some of them and also appointed SETA chairs and some Board members.

In the statement, the SETA Forum said: “We commit ourselves to ensuring that our work and the product thereof are underpinned by impact, it has quality and takes into consideration the needs of the previously marginalised.” It added: “The SETA Forum fully endorses the minister’s new vision for the post-school landscape and the overall transformation and developmental agenda for the SETA system.

“We, as the forum, reiterate that we will cooperate with the minister and continue to engage him in all transformation matters, including the changes to the SETA landscape. We also reaffirm that whatever differences may arise from time to time, the legal route to resolve these is a hindrance to progress.

“We wish to state categorically that we fully support the minister’s transformation processes in the post-school sphere. We are fully aware that the SETA sector needs urgent transformation to cope with the critical shortage in skills and training for our people. In this regard, we emphasise that we support the appointment of independent chairs as initiated by the minister.”

“We are also in agreement on the need for the realignment of the SETAs, with the mandate of the DHET in mind as the guiding light.

“As the SETA Forum, we unreservedly welcome the opportunity to engage with the DHET on strategies around skills development. We believe that we can only do better if we continue to engage each other.

“We categorically distance ourselves from the ongoing case at the Labour Court between the DHET and Services SETA. We understand the recent judgment to apply solely to the Services SETA.

“On its side, the DHET restates its goal to restructure the post-school terrain to achieve the overall objectives of skills development, employment creation and eradication of poverty. The DHET commits itself to continue to engage and consult with all relevant stakeholders and institutions in pursuit of this goal.”

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NEW STRATEGY DEMANDS NEW STRUCTURES

The National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) III speaks to Government policy and will contribute to the achievement of the country's New Growth Path, Industrial Action Plan and Human Resources Development Strategy, while addressing employer demands through measurable skills development interventions, according to merSETA CEO Dr Raymond Patel.

By Achieve Correspondent

Dr Patel says NSDS III does not treat all SETAs the same with a one-size fits all approach. Instead, the new strategy looks at how each specific SETA could assist in dealing with the skills crisis in South Africa, which is a marked improvement on NSDS I and NSDS II. "The demands and focus of NSDS III are also very different from those of NSDS I and II," says Patel.

"Partnerships are more crucial than ever. Without collaboration at almost every level, the vision of NSDS III cannot be realised. There is a recognition that all role players in skills development share the vision of a better-skilled workforce for economic growth and that efforts planned in isolation do not take into account the country's overall needs."

Dr Patel says merSETA realises it is not possible to drive the new strategy with the old organisational structure of the previous two strategies. "Inevitably, strategy comes first and the organisational structure follows, so our organisation will have to change in order to deliver successfully on the NSDS III.

"It is more of a qualitative strategy unlike the quantitative approach of NSDS I and NSDS II. The new strategy has much more emphasis on monitoring and evaluation in terms of outcomes." Dr Patel says one of the changes required in merSETA's organisational structure is the need for units that will deal with the rural women, the youth, and research, innovation and development.

The merSETA facilitates skills development in the following sub - sectors: metal and engineering; auto manufacturing; motor retail and component manufacturing; and tyre

manufacturing and plastics industries. Together, the five sub-sectors comprise about 44 000 companies, with a workforce of about 600 000.

The total levy income is about R600 million. The merSETA does not collect levies but instead receives collected levies from the Department of Higher Education And Training of which 70% are disbursed as grants and 10% kept for administration. Dr Patel explains the merSETA does not train, but facilitates the process of training by paying grants; registering moderators and assessors; identifying scarce skills; accrediting training providers; monitoring the quality of training and implementing projects to close the skills gap.

"We aim to also ensure that mechanisms are in place to effectively track our projects and our learner successes. The development of youth, women, people in the rural areas and people with disabilities will be heightened in the next five years," says Dr Patel.

He points out that merSETA has been a consistent top performer, maintaining an excellent rating against NSDS I and II targets. In 2010, it became one of the key players in skills development and training, which has made it one of the best performing SETAs.

"In the past, merSETA has been successful because of a very proactive and participatory Board, which understood the industry it was serving. The merSETA has also been innovative with the right mix of managers and staff.

"Last year, our success was 4,82 on the Department of Labour's scorecard out of a possible five, which was 118% of target. The merSETA experienced 8,5% growth last year, which compared favourably to the 3,5% growth in the country's GDP," says Dr Patel.



merSETA Chief Executive Officer - Dr Raymond Patel

“It is more of a qualitative strategy unlike the quantitative approach of NSDS I and NSDS II. The new strategy has much more emphasis on monitoring and evaluation in terms of outcomes.”

He says about 80% of merSETA's new Board members were on its old Board, which provides continuity and confidence that the goals of the new five-year mandate will be achieved. However, Dr Patel says the merSETA's biggest challenge is to change the general mindset that the university is the only institution available to further one's education.

“We desperately need practical engineering and artisan skills to develop the country's manufacturing and beneficiation capacity. For instance, our metals are being mined in South Africa, but then leave our shores and beneficiated somewhere else before being sold back to us. If we were adding value and beneficiating the metals ourselves, we would be growing and developing our country far more successfully than we are”.

According to merSETA, the following priority projects have been initiated successfully:

- Accelerated Artisans Training Programme (AATP) - the aim of this project is to test, prove and promote the possibility of qualifying artisans within a far shorter time than usual, through a “modern apprenticeship approach”. At the end of February 2011, the total project uptake reached 3 093 apprentices (1 432 funded by the National Skills Fund and 1 661 funded by merSETA) against a total budget of R280-million. Since the launch of the project, more than 11 000 artisans have entered the programme. It has had 90% successful completions on metal trades and 50% on motor related trades, significantly above the national average. Much work has been done to consolidate a broader platform for this project in the NSDS III period;
- Accounting Technicians Project-the Accounting Technicians project was launched with the aim of improving the entry and middle management level financial skills in participating organisations. The project is undertaken in association with AAT SA,

which is a unique partnership between the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants and the Association of Accounting Technicians. It runs over three years against a budget of R2-million a year for a total of 100 candidates;

- New Venture Creation (NVC) Project - in the past financial year, 480 candidates were reached across all provinces and in rural areas. This year, in addition to collaborating with six further education and training colleges, merSETA has introduced a mentorship and support programme for all merSETA NVC graduates at an average spend of around R15-million a year;
- Retrenchment Assistance Programme (RAP) - this training assistance, together with learner allowances (where applicable), is offered to all affected workers since April 2007 to help them upgrade their skills or develop new skills so that they can re-enter the labour market as quickly as possible or embrace

“Inevitably, strategy comes first and the organisational structure follows, so our organisation will have to change in order to deliver successfully on the NSDS III.”



Clockwise from top: President Jacob Zuma and Dr Raymond Patel; Dr Raymond Patel, Deputy President Kgalema Motlanthe and former merSETA Chairperson Jeanne Esterhuizen; Dr Raymond Patel receiving the BBQ Award



entrepreneurship. Re-employment or self-employment of the retrenched worker remains the project's ultimate objective. About 32 companies and 4 127 workers have been assisted, to the tune of R51,3-million;

- Science, Engineering and Technology Project - to develop a strategy and plan for the future implementation of a science, engineering and technology capacity-building initiative amongst schools in the FET sector, based on the promotion of linkages within companies in the manufacturing, engineering and related services sector. Now in its second year of implementation, with a budget of R4,5-million, it had 600 intakes in the 2010/11 financial year and 300 of these learners completed their grades (11 and 12) with excellent marks. Grade 12 learners had a 100% pass rate last year, with 105 distinctions and 85% university entrance;
- Toolbox Pilot Project - to ease the learning pathways of candidate artisans in the small- to medium-sized enterprise (SME) workplace learning settings, by providing custom-assembled toolboxes for merSETA funded learners in the respective trades. About 177 companies and 381 learners have received toolboxes since April 2010, valued at R5,4-million; and

- Voucher Implementation Programme - this allows for SMEs in the manufacturing, engineering and related services sector to easily access training for their employees. This, in the form of a wide range of unit standards-based short courses and skills programmes. The total annual project value has been around R30-million, and several thousand learners and SMEs have been reached through this initiative over the years.

PLASTICS INDUSTRY AND PARTNERS OFFER AN OPPORTUNITY OF LIFETIME

By Achieve Correspondent

The Plastics Federation of South Africa (PFSA) will launch a one-year pilot project to train 30 deaf students in working with composites as part of the Cape Town Boatbuilding and Technology Initiative.

According to Vanessa Davidson, Skills Development Facilitator for the Cape Town Boatbuilding and Technology Initiative (CTBi), 40 percent of young South Africans between 16 and 25 are unemployed and do not go to school. “Disabled youngsters have an even bigger problem and face even greater obstacles as there are not many opportunities or job facilities that cater for their specific needs,” she says.

Recognising the needs of deaf and hearing-impaired youngsters from disadvantaged communities, the Khayelitsha-based Whisper Boat Building Academy was founded in 2004 as a non-profit organisation that teaches deaf students in the art of boat building.

“There is a tremendous shortage of skilled labour in the Western Cape Boat Building Industry and the deaf students of the Whisper Boat Building Academy are a welcome relief in this shortage,” says WBBA founder Peter Jacops.

The Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services Education and Training Authority (merSETA) has given this initiative its vote of confidence by signing a Memorandum of Understanding, thereby committing itself to fund the full tuition of the 30 students who will be recruited and selected by the PFSA.

Training will take place with the help of a full-time sign language interpreter and will consist of classroom-based training combined with workplace experience, presented as individual skills programmes. Successful learners will graduate after six months and be issued with PFSA certificates in Polymer Composite Fabrication on NQF Level 2.

“These students will be able to provide for themselves and their families an honest income and will be equipped with qualifications, skills and a trade high in demand and crucial to the economy,” says PFSA Training Director Anton Hanekom.

He explained that successful students will be able to work in a variety of fields in the plastics industry, ranging from working as laminators for boat builders to swimming pool constructors, canopy constructors and other composite fields. The Cape Town Boatbuilding and Technology Initiative will also assist students with job placements once they have graduated.

The opportunity is open to any student (male or female) who is 18-years or older, deaf or hearing impaired, but able to speak sign language.

Successful candidates must have a valid South African identity document, be willing to learn, enjoy working with their hands and be willing to commit themselves to fulltime study over the next six months.



Hearing-impaired learners at the Whisper Boat Building Academy

merSETA - REVOLUTIONISING THE YOUTH AGENDA

As a major force and driver of artisan development in the country, the merSETA is contributing immensely to ensuring that young people are informed when choosing a career. This was evident at the Automechanika SA career exhibition. The event took place in Nasrec, Johannesburg, earlier this year, *writes Sibongiseni Zinjiva Ka-Mnguni.*

Seen as a leading brand among business-to-business automotive aftermarket trade fairs, Automechanika recently extended its portfolio of trade fairs to 14 cities and 13 countries. The 2011 fair, staged at the Expo Centre in Johannesburg, offered a spectrum of products from the fields of automotive parts, car wash, workshop and filling-station equipment, IT products and services, accessories and tuning. According to merSETA Career Development Project Manager Ms Carmen Adams artisan reserves are the richest resource South Africa has and any initiative that helps merSETA to process that potential has immense value.

For the first time, the 2011 trade fair showcased careers in merSETA's skills arena. The fair and the arena were at the same location and this gave merSETA a targeted effect on how to utilise its products. In addition, merSETA, the Retail Motor Industry (RMI) and skills experts collaborated and worked tirelessly to set up two motor trade competitions for selecting the best Auto Body Repairer and Auto Technician in South Africa. Ms Adams said the event exceeded expectations in its promise to attract local and international business interest for merSETA-related motor retail companies.

Practical skills exhibitions allowed learners to try skills or experience skills demonstrations. A total of 580 FET College learners and 48 FET College lecturers attended. In addition, the Provincial Department of Education in Gauteng and Sci-Bono worked in collaboration with the merSETA to bring 3095 learners and 94 educators from 26 technical schools as well as educators from special schools to the merSETA's Skills Arena at Automechanika SA. Learners reported being positively inspired and their interest in trades stimulated.

The Deputy President of South Africa Mr Kgalema Motlanthe, had a guided tour of the skills arena, conducted by merSETA CEO Dr Raymond Patel. They were also exposed to practical skills exhibitions. "The merSETA will definitely use the Automechanika SA platform to market skills and scale up our outreach in future," added Ms Adams.

She commented that the inclusion of the World Skills Competition to Automechanika SA presented the ideal opportunity to attract youth to certain careers and also encourage the return of pride in the trades.

"Skills competitions are intrinsic to the merSETA vision for the future. These competitions allow us to benchmark skills internationally and help us attract and retain the best talent in our sector".

"Many options are possible and each person has a unique set of circumstances, limitations and a context that requires consideration before a career choice is made. The South African economy demands certain skills and if people align their talents to what is needed, then more people would have work," she said.

Career guidance can help people find a career that suits their personality, values and interests and can support people to be in a continuous process of learning and growth. "It is ideal if people realise their talent, their potential to develop this talent and if there is passion for doing certain work."

Passionate about career development, Ms Adams added that one must consider all aspects of a career before choosing a discipline.



“Skills competitions are intrinsic to the merSETA vision for the future.”

Career Development Project Manager Carmen Adams



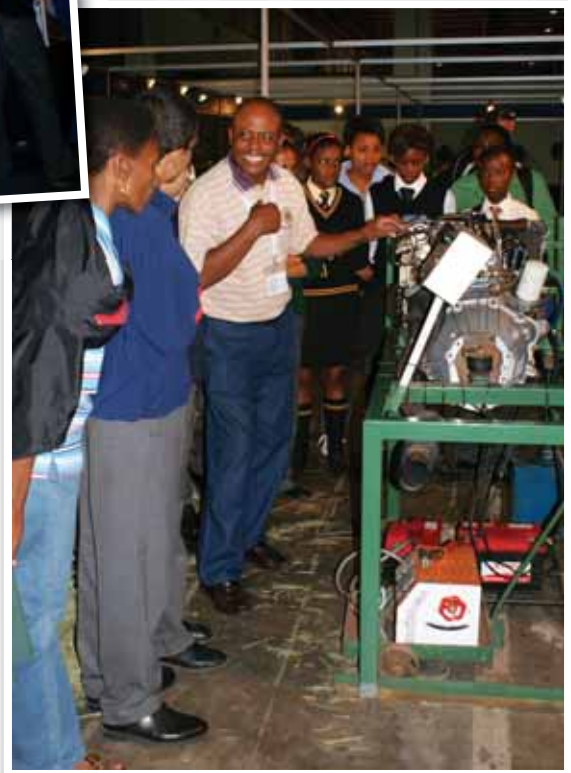
Learners trying their skills at Automechanika

At the fair, the merSETA introduced the “try-a-skill” concept where learners had an opportunity to try-a-skill first hand. In this scenario, the audience was exposed to key tasks expected in that skill area, using actual material, supplies, tools and equipment in a real setting for such work. People then appreciate the craft and art in the skill and the person who presents the skill has a chance to communicate the passion of the craft.

Ms Adams said learners and educators gave positive feedback. “All career expos they had attended up to now were just a distribution point for brochures and information and were considered boring. The educators and learners reported that they understood the practical demonstrations easily and had fun trying skills,” elaborates Ms Adams.

The career exhibition targeted Grade 9 learners in order to indicate the gateway to merSETA which is Science, Mathematics (especially pure mathematics) and Technology so that learners choose these learning areas. However, in most cases, Grade 11 learners are still in the process of choosing careers and they need support.

merSETA also focus on ensuring they are clear on the opportunities and various options available. Life Orientation Educators and Career Guidance Councillors also need to



understand what is possible in terms of merSETA careers and learning pathways. merSETA interacts with this group so that they are better able to advise learners and parents.

Ms Adams reiterated the importance of career development initiatives as an integral part of youth development in remote areas, Ms Adams said attention is given to communities where youth are vulnerable and have limited or no access to accurate, current information and career guidance services.



The SA Army was one of the exhibitors at Automechanika SA

“We favour educational developmental initiatives above superficial events, so opportunities that allow us to engage and enlighten audiences receive our attention.

“We are able to respond positively to some requests from our stakeholders and communities in presenting ourselves at events, but we also have a more pro-active campaign in place, called the merSETA Gateway Innovation Network. This campaign is based on the principles of partnership because merSETA is not operating in a vacuum in our approach to Career Development,” commented Ms Adams.

These relationships allow merSETA to develop, support and strengthen existing public infrastructure and systems that have a youth development agenda and mandate.

As NSDS III advocates partnerships, merSETA has moved swiftly to partner with other stakeholders in expediting youth development in marginalised communities. One such partnership is with the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) and another is with the South African Qualifications Authority’s (SAQA) Career Guidance Helpline services.

These partnerships enhance existing merSETA national outreach capability and increase its impact. Clients who use the services of merSETA partners also receive guidance, advice and information on merSETA careers and learning pathways, thus reducing the expense, time and effort on

the public who need comprehensive quality service.

Provincially, merSETA has partnerships with Sci-Bono in Gauteng (fully supported by the Department of Education in Gauteng); the Department of Education in the Northern Cape and in the Eastern Cape Province where merSETA has established a Chair for Engineering Development at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU).

“We will be proactive in the challenge to increase levels of employability and improve workplaces and play our part in enhancing learning experiences so that the best talent is put out there. We do this to meet the demand for skills on a global scale, but our charity starts at home, so we are loyal to our sector and our country.”

Ms Adams said the country needs to use skills as one of the main contributors towards the measure of worth.

“Let’s ignite pride in human skill and invest resources and expertise in human skills upliftment initiatives so that we can translate political freedom into economic freedom. In my view, that’s the best way to build wealth and self-worth.

“I would like to acknowledge and thank all stakeholders involved in the project. Without their support and contributions from public and private stakeholders, the merSETA would not be successful on youth development initiatives,” concluded Ms Adams.

TRANSFORMATION NEEDED IN MOTOR INDUSTRY

By Independent Correspondent

Addressing the Motor Industry Staff Association (MISA) executive round table in Nasrec, Johannesburg recently, Deputy President Kgalema Motlanthe expressed optimism about the reconstruction, development and prosperity the sector can contribute to South Africa's economic goals.



From left: Dr Raymond Patel, Jeanne Esterhuizen, Deputy President, Mr Kgalema Motlanthe and Ms Moketenyana Mayongo

“**G**overnment has officially declared 2011 the year for job creation. It follows that this gathering provides a solid platform on which we can share ideas about what together we can do towards the realisation of this important national goal,” said Mr Motlanthe.

He went further to say the meeting carried the potential for government, labour and business to further engage on some key sector-related issues such as local content, transformation and long-term economic growth plans for the benefit of all.

“This will go a long way to address poverty and inequalities in several parts of South Africa. The current Motor Industry Development Programme (MIDP) and Automotive Production and Development Programme (APDP) remain important industrial policy tools to support, promote and

advance future sustainability of South African automotive sector.

“On this account, we reiterate that the partnership between government, labour, business and other role players will be indispensable for our recovery from the job losses experienced in the past few years as a result of the global economic meltdown.”

The Deputy President reiterated the commitment of the Government to create jobs. He said the primacy of job creation as one of the critical priority areas of government is illustrated in the Industrial Policy Action Plan (IPAP2) as outlined by the Department of Trade and Industry.

Mindful of the challenges lying ahead, he said this assumed more importance in light of many challenges either laid bare or in some case, worsened by the recent recession. “Equally, we are alive to the need to gear our efforts to

addressing other outstanding areas in this sector.” Mr Motlanthe said despite notable successes achieved by the Automotive, Medium and Heavy Commercial Sectors, there is still a need to build adequate capacity in this sector.

This is the area where the financial backup from the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC), as stated by President Jacob Zuma in the state of the nation address, will be critical for making improvements on a broader scale.

He said the automotive industry contributes considerably to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and job creation. It is in fact the largest in the manufacturing sector of the South African economy and contributed 5, 9% to the GDP in 2009.

International trends indicate that for every employee in the manufacturing of motor vehicles, two or more workers are employed within the sales, servicing and repair of motor vehicles.

The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) reports that the whole value chain of the automotive sector employed 230 000 workers. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) 2010 Annual Report depicts South African economy recovering more rapidly than anticipated, at an annual growth rate of 3% of GDP.

Mr Motlanthe said such recovery has also been evident in new vehicle sales for 2010 showing an improvement of almost 25% compared to the previous year.

“The role of the automotive industry in the South African economy, and particularly in creating employment, has made a compelling case for government to invest significantly to support further growth in this sector.”

Government’s continued support for the automotive sector has created favourable conditions that made it possible to attract an upward investment of R13 billion from original equipment manufacturers.

Encouraging domestic manufacturing and production of automobile products in South Africa will undoubtedly contribute to the creation of more jobs. “To support this function, I am informed, the original equipment manufacturers Purchasing Council will shortly finalise a proposal for localisation programme which would positively comply with the Competition Act,” elaborates Mr Motlanthe. Such a step will also strengthen the local component supply chain process. In addition, the draft action plans for development of the sub-sector have also been completed and will be signed off by the end of the first quarter.

“In the context of a rapidly changing environment, which needs new skills and technology to remain on par with competition, government will continue to work with the industry in developing and honing skills to ensure that

South Africa remains a preferred location for the production of world class vehicles.”

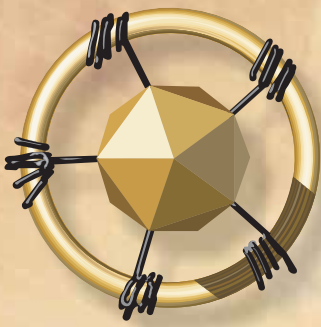
“It is worth noting that the majority of businesses in the retail automotive sector are small entities which may create job opportunities only if they have the ability to understand challenges facing South Africa and the need to implement correct interventions.”

Addressing the issue of decent employment and training, Mr Motlanthe was quick to say the focus should not only be on creating decent employment but provision of necessary training to enhance the industry’s capacity in providing quality service to its customers. He also cautioned that much needs to be done in transforming the automotive industry.

“To this end, government has consistently raised concern about the level of economic participation by historically disadvantaged individuals at ownership and management levels. I am sure you will agree, therefore, that much still needs to be done to ensure a more representative industry which draws strength from the diversity of its people and which is, therefore, better positioned to respond to global imperatives by leveraging our abundant human resources. Finally, as an engine of economic growth, the automotive industry will continue to enjoy considerable government support to realise growth and prosperity,” assured Mr Motlanthe.

In his closing remarks, he said he is confident the key role players would take full advantage of the favourable conditions created by government to grow the automotive industry to levels that will enable it to contribute further to job creation and inclusive economic growth.

“The role of the automotive industry in the South African economy, and particularly in creating employment has made a compelling case for government to invest significantly to support further growth in this sector.”



merSETA

MANUFACTURING, ENGINEERING
AND RELATED SERVICES SETA

The merSETA is one of 21 Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) established to promote skills development in terms of the Skills Development Act of 1998. The 21 SETAs broadly reflect different sectors of the South African economy. The merSETA encompasses Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services.

The various industry sectors are covered by five chambers within the merSETA: Metal and Engineering, Auto Manufacturing, Motor Retail and Components, New Tyre and Plastic.

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MANUFACTURING
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REGISTRATION, ENGINEERING SERVICES SETA

merSETA Services:

Registration of Learnerships; Payment of mandatory grants (WSP and ATR); Payment of discretionary grant; Learnerships Apprenticeships; Skills Programmes Workplace Experience grants; Assistance with grant application submissions; Resolution of training related disputes; SETA transfers; Advice on SETA levy exemption and disbursement of grants; advice on tax incentives on training expenditure and Regional outreach programmes.



THE SECTOR SKILLS PLAN - PERSPECTIVE ON GLOBAL ECONOMY

By Achieve Correspondent

According to the Research and Development Manager, Professor Salim Akoojee, the merSETA Sector Skills Plan 2010/11-2015/16 (SSP) has been developed at a time when major national development policies are being proposed and implemented. He says a serious review of policies and strategies of both the state and the private sector needs to be undertaken to respond appropriately to national development challenges.

“

The impact on skills development is, therefore, likely to be considerable. This plan is being drawn up at a time when major changes in the skills development landscape have been envisaged.

“These changes include modifications to the content and methodology of sector skills planning itself, the relationship between sector skills planning and strategy-making within the sector, and a shift from a top-down to an interactive relationship between sectoral and national skills planning,” says Prof Akoojee.

The merSETA Sector Skills Plan was the result of active engagement with stakeholders. There was a clearly defined purpose and development to ensure that the results of extensive research are realisable in workplaces.

In merSETA, there is a deliberate attempt to ensure synergy between national and local priorities. While evidence suggests that Workplace Skills Plans (WSP) are not adequate for determining complete and comprehensive skills planning in the sector, it does suggest trends which need to be accommodated for sector skills planning.

More attention needs, therefore, to be given to the relationship between workplace and sector skills planning. Professor Akoojee went further to say the SSP summarises perspectives on the global economy and its implications for industrial growth in the manufacturing sector in South Africa. He said questions about the duration, scale and nature of the global recession are described, but warns that some caution needs to be exercised when forecasts are used for skills planning purposes.

Thought must be given to economic indicators in skills planning. The SSP does – nevertheless provide the following information useful for describing the nature of various sub-sectors.

These include:

- Total employment figures in each industry, disaggregated by race and gender; and
- Age data -- These figures suggest that nearly a third of employees in the sector are scheduled to retire within the next 10 years. Age is therefore a major replacement demand variable for the sector, and various replacement demand data, most notably the available data for HIV and AIDS.

Other relevant national policy and related information useful for skills planning used in this Sector Skills Plan include:

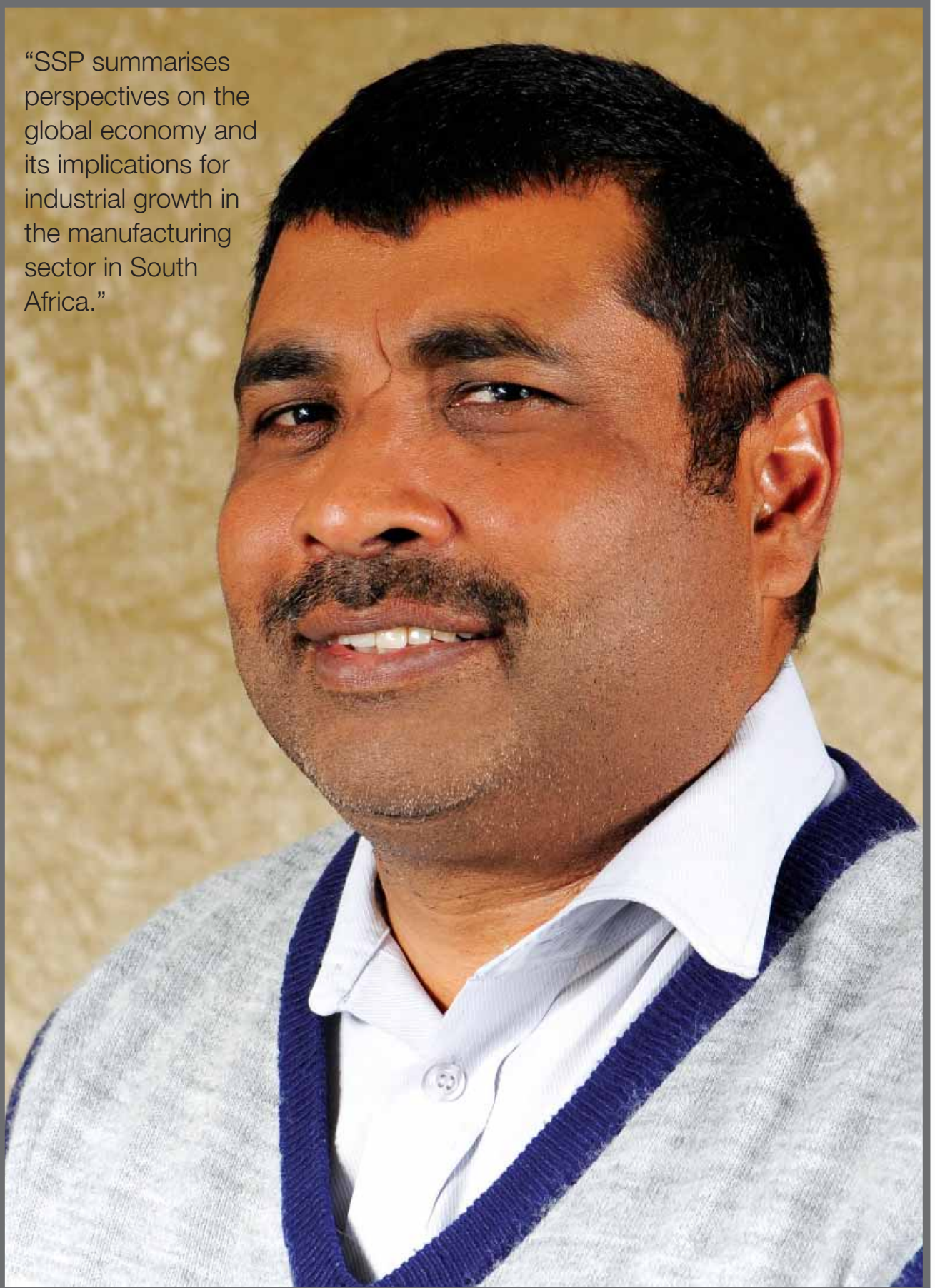
- The Industrial Policy Action Plan (IPAP II) forecasts employment growth of 160 000 new jobs in the automotive, new tyre and motor industries as well as 140 000 new jobs in metals between 2010 and 2020.

There are no specific forecasts for plastics, but since the plastics sector is a supplier to the automotive sector, some expansion is also predicted. The combined forecast is therefore at least 300 000 new jobs in the foreseeable future in sectors served by the merSETA.

These figures correlate with merSETA's independent labour market forecast. However, the data required to calculate productivity improvements, labour utilisation and the impact of wage inflation on employment do not yet exist. Minor adaptations to the merSETA forecast have, therefore, been undertaken. They are consistent with the IPAP forecasts; and replacement demand suggests that roughly 150 000 new labour market entrants will also be required to deal with the impact of retirement, mortality and emigration.

Professor Akoojee comments that these estimates will form the basis of extensive consultation and refinement

“SSP summarises perspectives on the global economy and its implications for industrial growth in the manufacturing sector in South Africa.”



Research and Development Manager Professor Salim Akoojee

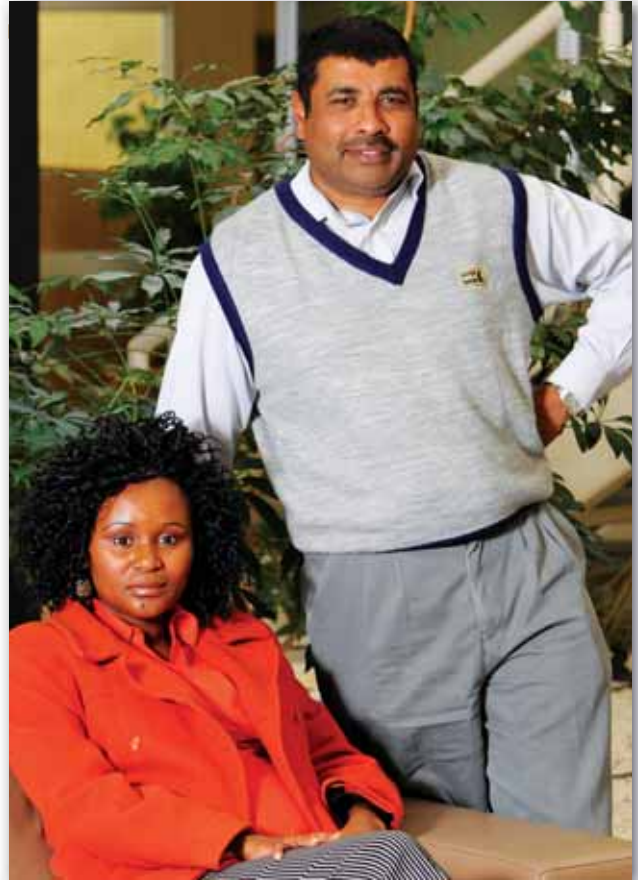
going forward. However, they do point to the key strategic issues facing the sector. The following are the features of the analyses:

- The scale of skills development required over the next 10 years to deal with employment growth and replacement demand exceeds current figures, and a significant expansion in skills development initiatives is required to support the envisaged expansion;
- These increases are not possible with the current levels of funding through the skills levy system. merSETA will be required to seek “funding” in new ways to enter partnerships and to mobilise its sector behind the challenges; and
- The supply-side capacity to deliver the demand-side growth will need to be reviewed. merSETA will need to consider building provider capacity, especially in its key skills development focus area: technical and professional categories of training.

These figures represent the skills development needs to address employment growth and replacement demand, and do not reflect the current needs of employees in the sector. These have been reached, where possible, through stakeholder consensus in workshops and will need to be reviewed in this period.

Professor Akoojee outlined the extensive process undertaken in developing the sector skills plan:

- A literature survey of available data was conducted for each sub-sector; stakeholder workshops were conducted with each chamber during which stakeholders identified the purposes that they wanted skills development to serve, reviewed existing provision, mapped the value chains for their industry and discussed the issues arising from the literature surveys; and
- A labour market forecast was completed for each sub-sector for which data was available; national data sets were reviewed and analysed; and
- Workplace skills plans and other data were collated and analysed;
- Various merSETA stakeholder forums engaged with the analysis and plans (including merSETA management, the research and development committee, the inter-chamber forum and stakeholder caucus groups); and
- Various ministerial entities were consulted to ensure that feedback was provided, These included the Department of Higher Education and Training, Department of Trade and Industry, Department of Science and Technology, Department of Public Works and the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism.



Professor Salim Akoojee and Vuyo Kibido

The full report can be accessed on the merSETA website – Research & Development – Sector Skills Plan.

For enquiries contact Vuyo Kibido at 010 219 3000

“These figures correlate with merSETA’s independent labour market forecast. However, the data required to calculate productivity improvements, labour utilisation and the impact of wage inflation on employment do not yet exist. Minor adaptations to the merSETA forecast have, therefore, been undertaken. They are consistent with the IPAP forecasts.”

HARDWORK AND FORTITUDE PAY-OFF

By Independent Correspondent

Vuyisile can attest to the adage that all that glitters is not gold. Like others, who had a dream of making it big in the city of gold, for him it was not to be. Instead, he found his niche back home in the Eastern Cape.

Leaving behind his family to work in the city of gold as a core driller was a dream for Vuyisile Ngema.

“Things didn’t work out for me in Johannesburg and I decided to go back home to the Eastern Cape. After working as a tyre-fitter, I joined Coca Cola Fortune as a workshop shop assistant,” explains Vuyisile.

With the passion and drive to achieve even more, he felt a missing link in his career – the desire to be a qualified diesel mechanic. This meant he had to undergo a trade test assessment.

In 2006, he applied for the section 28 trade testing with guidance and assistance from the merSETA Eastern Cape Regional Office. He was advised to undergo a pre-assessment and to improve his education. In 2007, he enrolled for the Adult Basic Education (ABET) course. “It was very difficult but I knew what I wanted and in 2009 I successfully obtained my ABET level 4 certificate,” comments Vuyisile.

It is often the last key in the bunch that opens the lock. After four unsuccessful attempts, Vuyisile achieved success in the January 2011 test and was issued with a trade test certificate.

Indeed, life is not about how fast you run or how high you climb, but how well you bounce back. He passed the practical trade test at DTTC in the Eastern Cape in April this year with distinctions. He extended his gratitude to Coca Cola, ABET Educator Mr Fred Ras and the merSETA for their assistance in closing his educational gaps and making his dream come true.

He now calls himself a “Diesel Mechanic - Ambagsman”, and is now in a position to send his children to university and provide his family with a better life.

Vuyisile is living testimony of not knowing how many miles you have to run when chasing a dream. As Ralph Waldo Emerson put it: “Our greatest glory is not in never failing, but in rising up every time we fail.” merSETA is proud of playing its part in closing the skills gap; Vuyisile can take a bow for his relentless effort and determination.



merSETA Eastern Cape Client Liaison Manager Mr Zwelethemba Ngayeka and high flying Vuyisile Ngema

“Life is not about how fast you run or how high you climb, but how well you bounce back.”

merSETA BURSARY SCHEME AT THE CUTTING EDGE

By Sibongiseni Ziinjiva Ka-Mnguni

The merSETA bursary scheme continues to play a pivotal role in supplying the country with much-needed skills. This was evident at the recent graduation ceremony at the Tshwane University of Technology in Pretoria, where eight merSETA bursary holders graduated.

When the merSETA Bursary Scheme Manager, Ms Camilla Smith, said that the merSETA is making a difference via its bursary scheme, many waited for proof.

Seizing the opportunity is what the following graduates did: Lebohang Sello, National Diploma Chemical Engineering; Cassius Chabani, National Diploma Mechanical Engineering; Itumeleng Molapo, National Diploma Chemical Engineering; Tebogo Molele, B. Tech Metallurgy; Ntshani Risuna, National Diploma Chemical Engineering; Masego Lepule, National Diploma Metallurgy; Dineo Thaisi, B. Tech Polymer technology and Samuel Ngobeni, National Diploma Electrical Engineering.

Flanked by parents and friends, these bright minds stole the show when they graduated at the Tshwane University of Technology.

One of the graduates, Lebohang Sello was on cloud nine and couldn't conceal her excitement. Tracing her background at school, she was an exceptional student. She was awarded a certificate for best matric student in English, and was also a part of the school debating team. She was also an avid sportsperson.

Lebohang's career aspirations are to obtain relevant experience and specialise in environmental technology, leading to a management position. Bold and ambitious, she wants to be part of a unique team that will find and implement solutions for global warming.

Her choice of study, Chemical Engineering, was motivated by the passion and love she has for Mathematics and Physical Science, which included Chemistry.

Describing her journey as daunting but exciting, she lost her mother when she was 16-years-old, but held an unwavering belief that she will make a difference. She attributes her success to her grandparents who have been a pillar of strength and support throughout her life.

"The world does not owe me anything, but I owe it to myself to make something out of my life. I looked at the options available for me like applying for bursaries and seeking employment," says Lebohang.

She did her in-service training at Vanchem in Witbank. "The training allowed me to acquire vital skills required to excel in my field of study as well as hands on exposure of engineering processes within the industry. It also enabled me to obtain my qualification."

Lebohang says to be successful in engineering, a technical skill is vital while strong analytical and problem-solving skills are also crucial for success.

"I believe my background and life journey greatly influenced my desire to do better and to achieve more each day. Being the first child in my family to complete matric successfully has taught me that anything is possible. If I put my mind to it and constantly try to live up to my expectations as well as to attempt doing what may seem impossible, I will succeed," she says.

Not to be outdone is Cassius Chabani. His career choice, mechanical engineering, was greatly influenced by his elder brother, who studied science at another tertiary institution in Pretoria.

He could not hide his excitement in obtaining his National Diploma. Cassius invited his family members all the way



From Left: Ntshani Risuna, Cassius Chabani and Dineo Thaisi

from Limpopo to celebrate his success, and they made the effort to witness the historic moment.

“Mechanical Engineering requires thinking; you need to have a Mechanical Engineering approach, determine the problem and analyse different situations of the mechanical aspect,” explains Cassius.

The Malamulele-born youngster says his chosen field of study was also inspired by watching robotics movies. He thanked the merSETA for the financial assistance and mentioned a number of challenges faced by those who do not receive financial assistance. “These include buying books, paying tuition fees, paying for accommodation and acquiring other resources.”

He was able to cut on traveling as he was staying at the campus residence and this provided him with an opportunity to spend most of his time studying. Ambitious as ever, Cassius intends to be an engineer, and he is currently studying towards his B-Tech degree. He is currently employed by Ford on their Supplier Technical Department.

Another star performer from the merSETA stable was Dineo Thaisi, who studied Polymer Technology and graduated with a B-Tech. Asked about her achievement, the modest and ever-cheerful Dineo heaped praise on merSETA.

“I know I wouldn’t be where I am today if it wasn’t for the opportunity that merSETA gave me. And I would also like to thank my whole family as well - when things were tough,

they encouraged me to continue working hard.”

Polymer Technology deals with the manufacturing, processing, analysis and application of long chain molecules. Materials typically classified as polymers include plastics, paints, rubber, foams, adhesives, sealants, varnishes and many more.

For those who thought student life was easy, they will have to think again. “You have to know what you want in life in order to achieve your goals and avoid negative influences at all cost. You basically need to strike a balance between your school work and social life, otherwise you might end up dropping out of school,” Dineo explains.

Dineo is currently working as a Temp Lab Technician at a chemical company in Midrand and intends to further her studies in Polymer Technology. Asked about her job, she says it entails the testing of samples, doing research projects, improving existing formulations, etc

“I have learnt that even if you fall, it’s not the end. All you have to do is get up, dust yourself off and continue your walk as you will get there eventually.”

DISABLED PEOPLE PROVE THEIR WORTH

By Sibongiseni Ziinjiva Ka-Mnguni

Hungry for success and willing to go the extra mile, these graduates were in a euphoric mood and proved that talent and determination is a cornerstone for success. Seventy-six disabled learners graduated recently, creating yet another milestone for people living with disabilities. The two glittering graduation ceremonies took place in Gauteng and Durban respectively.

The success behind these learners is the result of the sterling relationship between merSETA and Sheetch SA.

A relationship that started when Sheetch SA began providing training through the merSETA Voucher Implementation Project (VIP), Sheetch proved its mettle when they began training at the Schools for the Deaf. Since then, they have grown in leaps and bounds.

People with disabilities are one of the three target groups identified as most vulnerable in South Africa. Legislation aims to make it possible for people with disabilities to enter employment easily.

In delivering its mandate, the merSETA identified the need for a renewed focus on addressing the training needs of this heterogeneous group of people, and therefore proposed a pilot project that focused on skills development for disabled people within the manufacturing, engineering and related services sector.

According to Project Manager Ms Romiela Pillay, the pilot project focused on taking deaf/ hearing impaired/special educational needs candidates through the following (Learnership) qualifications:

- National certificate in Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services - NQF L1; and
- National Certificate: Engineering Fabrication (Boilermaker) - NQF L2.

The pilot project commenced in April last year and the results have been phenomenal, with all learners being deemed competent.

The first graduation ceremony took place at the Durban School for the Hearing Impaired, which saw 58 learners graduating -- 28 learners received the National Certificate

in Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services NQF Level 1 -- and 12 learners received the National Certificate in Engineering Fabrication (Boiler Making) NQF Level 2.

Delivering the keynote address, merSETA Chief Operations Officer Mr Wayne Adams congratulated the successful learners, pointing out that they were not ordinary, but extraordinary people. "You are pushing boundaries and making an effort to change your life and your circumstances -- this is exactly the kind of attitude we appreciate at merSETA," commented Mr Adams.

The Gauteng graduation was held at the Greyville Primary School in Lenasia where 18 learners received the National Certificate in Engineering Fabrication -- Boiler Making NQF Level 2. Amongst the dignitaries was Dr Hermean Laauwen from the Gauteng Department of Education.

Ms Pillay applauded the learners and the training provider, Sheetch SA. But there were challenges they had to overcome. "Learning material was not deaf-friendly. Sheetch SA and the Education and Training Department revised and edited the learning material to suit the deaf learner and the learners with special education needs.

Obtaining lead employers in Gauteng was also a challenge, mainly due to the fact that the majority of companies are unable to communicate in sign languages. Thus, it becomes a hindrance for companies to take on learners, but eventually we managed to gain the support of lead employers to place these learners," elaborated Ms Pillay. Commenting on the background of the learners, she said they were either deaf or learners with special learning needs. "Many of the learners come from indigent homes that are dependent on just the learner's disability grants. Before this learnership, many resigned themselves to having no future and not being viable in the economy of this country."



Disabled learners who graduated in Durban

This project has given impaired learners the opportunity to experience a workplace and being employees.

“This project has shown lead employers that these learners are no different from the able-bodied. The People with Disability Project has built the confidence of these learners and given them hope for the future.

“About 77% of the learners were given short-term employment contracts and companies are considering taking on about five learners as permanent,” added Ms Pillay.

Asked about the success rate of the project, she pointed out that 58 of 60 learners completed the project -- two learners moved into employment and chose to withdraw from the learnership.

Elated with his achievement, Sandile Shezi said: “On-the-job training has given me confidence. I am now able to operate the machine. I have learned to weld and buffing has given me a sense of achievement and self-worth. Being found to be competent has boosted my confidence and made me a better person. I like working and learning all the time.

“This course has helped me to realise my contribution to South Africa. This is the best thing to have happened to me and I intend to make the most of this wonderful opportunity,” concluded Sandile.

Being motivated and oozing with confidence is a sign that institutions like the merSETA are doing something right in upskilling and creating opportunities for disabled people. Against the backdrop of national growth but a deficit of skills, merSETA is hopeful that its contribution will go a long way in cutting the deficit.

We join hands in congratulating the graduates.

“You are pushing boundaries and making an effort to change your life and your circumstances -- this is exactly the kind of attitude we appreciate at merSETA.”

NORTHERN CAPE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND merSETA BOOST CAR REPAIR TRAINING

By Achieve Correspondent

The Northern Cape Department of Education and merSETA have agreed on a three year, R3-million project to boost auto-mechanical skills in the province.

The “wheels in motion” Project is linked to the Bloodhound Super Sonic Car, in which current land speed record holder, Andy Green, will attempt to break the sound barrier (1600 km) on land in June 2012 at Haakskeen Pan in the Northern Cape.

“This project will be the catalyst through which young people will acquire skills and develop innovative talents that will not only enable them, but also encourage them to pursue their studies in the selected disciplines,” said Northern Cape MEC for Education Ms Grizelda Cjiekella.

According to Ms Carmen Adams, merSETA’s Career Development Project Manager, the agreement between the Northern Cape DoE and merSETA makes it possible to supply selected learners with three car kits, support to assemble these as well as the chance to acquire further technical qualifications.

For its part, the Northern Cape DoE has identified three technical schools and three Dinaledi Schools as well as an FET college in the province where the learners will undergo the training.

The project will enhance learners, educators and infrastructure at FET colleges and GET Schools for greater involvement in the “Wheels in Motion” project and future skills development intervention projects and programmes.



Dr Raymond Patel at the “wheels in motion project” in the Northern Cape

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT BRIDGING THE GAP

By Achieve Correspondent

The issue of women empowerment is no longer the domain of NGOs but is now a national issue. The merSETA participated at this year's Rural Women's Empowerment workshop held in Potchefstroom. The aim of the workshop and exhibition was to bridge the gap between rural women, companies and government institutions.



Women attending the Rural Women Empowerment

The event gave a platform to these institutions to reach, empower, inspire and educate rural women by focusing on entrepreneurship, skills development and training, opportunities and making information accessible to women.

Addressing the Rural Women's Summit in Limpopo this year, Minister for Women, Children and People with Disability Ms Lulu Xingwana reiterated the importance of collaboration in addressing challenges women face. "To achieve development of rural women, we have to strengthen efforts that promote collaboration between communities, civil society, the three spheres of government and the private sector," she said. The merSETA heeded the call and sponsored the event in the North West province.

Elated about the success of the event, Mahlatse Masimini told Achieve "companies as well as government entities from all nine provinces received a platform to educate and inform women on relevant topics."

She said the initiative focused on highlighting and promoting key sectors as per the Joint Initiative in Priority Skills Acquisition (JIPSA) and Accelerated Shared Growth Initiative of South Africa (ASGISA).

It is a well known fact that women in rural areas are facing a mammoth task of addressing social and economic challenges. It is hoped the gains of the two-day workshop and exhibition will soon bear fruit.

NEW TRADE TEST CENTRE OPENED IN FREE STATE

SA Truck Bodies recently opened its doors to a brand new state of the art Decentralised Trade Test facility in Bloemfontein. This is the only privately-owned testing centre in South Africa for the trade, Vehicle Body Builder.

The other testing centre is the government-run Institute for the National Development of Learnerships Employment Skills and Labour (Indlela) in Johannesburg.

SA Truck Bodies partnered with the Institute for Quality (IQ), merSETA and others to make this dream a reality.

SA Truck Bodies have also trained more than 800 unemployed people in welding skills programmes in the last two years. This was made possible through merSETA's Discretionary Grant.

Learners who meet the standard of SA Truck are issued with a certificate and Statement of Results and more than 90% are offered employment at SA Truck and because of the high standard of training, those that are not taken up in the company is able to find employment elsewhere.

Speaking at the opening ceremony former Chairperson of the merSETA Ms Jeanne Esterhuizen pointed out the need to increase artisans in the field of Motor Body Building. Since 2007, a mere 31 people qualified as Vehicle Body Builders, yet the need is closer to 377 per year.

Director of Institute for Quality (IQ) Dr Tholsia Naicker said the country would require more such initiatives to ensure the needs of industry and skills development are addressed. She applauded the role of merSETA in quality assurance standards and the financial backing of such projects.

It is hoped this new testing centre will lead the way in enhancing skills development in the Free State in this particular discipline.



Former merSETA Chairperson Jeanne Esterhuizen

“Since 2007, nationally, a mere 31 people qualified as Vehicle Body Builders, yet the need is closer to 377 per year.”



GREEN MACHINES: OPPORTUNITY & RISKS FOR SA AUTO INDUSTRY”

The South African Automotive Week Conference in 2011, is a pre-cursor to the comprehensive South African Automotive Week in 2012

It brings industry to a common understanding of the future direction, scope, speed, opportunities and pitfalls of the global green economy on automotive manufacturing.

It presents case studies around the “green” plans and projects of OEMs as well as opportunity for the diversification of manufacturers into the Renewable Energy boom from bolts to turbines.

WHY GREEN THEME?

The present and future of manufacturing? Holds bottom line opportunities – eg. diversification Many local firms already producing pumps, tanks, valves & piping, meters, switch gear and turbines. Also opportunities in aluminum framing, glass mirrors, reflective dishes, electronic components etc. Poses threats – who will control the drivetrain? New way of doing business – how do we read the signs and respond? OEMs all have advanced green engines Global Green regulations

Lifestyle shift places us at a punctuation point in history

RATIONALE FOR PARTICIPANTS

Market capitalisation of publicly traded renewable companies doubled from \$50bn to \$100bn in 2 two years (2005-2007). The African market remains largely untapped. Opening Legislation fresh. Exploit early mover advantages.

Research shows that in conjunction with energy efficiency measures, 75% of South Africa’s electricity could be generated by exploiting renewable energy sources by 2050, slashing our CO2 emissions by 54% below 1990 levels.

Wind, geothermal and photovoltaic energy projects make the total renewable market to be at least R3 billion a year by 2012.

SITE VISITS

Delegates have the option of registering for site visits:

- ELIDZ
- Mercedes Benz SA
- Photo-voltaic cell factory
- Wind farm
- Makana bio-fuel project.

SPEARHEADING THE CAREER GUIDANCE

By Independent Correspondent

Inadequate career guidance in public schools has a profound negative impact on our matric results; it is against this background that merSETA took part at the South West Gauteng College exhibition held in Orange farm. The purpose of the exhibition was to make information available and also encourage learners to take up maths and science as subjects of choice.



Eager for knowledge – learners attending the South West Gauteng College exhibition

Most young people leave school with a vague knowledge of which career to pursue. Not having enough information becomes a handicap to learners' prospects of finding fulfilling employment. The career exhibition presented a perfect opportunity for learners to discover their aptitude in choosing a career for themselves.

merSETA joined in with other exhibitors in preaching the gospel of career guidance and advising learners to choose careers wisely, taking into account critical and scarce skills.

From Orange Farm, the crusade travelled to Newtown in the heart of Johannesburg where merSETA participated in Engineering Focus Week hosted by Sci-Bono Discovery, where a total of 3264 learners and 19 schools visited the centre over five days.

Hitting the byways and highways of South Africa, Operation Closing the Skills gap took to Kwazulu-Natal; Vulindlela South Hall was the venue for the Vulindlela career awareness roadshow.

The purpose of the roadshow was to equip rural youth with information to assist them in making well informed decisions when choosing a career.

High schools and unemployed youth graced the occasion that attracted close to 2000 visitors over the three days. As a catalyst for youth and skills development, merSETA advised learners on different career options and once again encouraged them to take up Maths and Science and pursue a career in the manufacturing and engineering sector.

As we celebrate Youth Month, we can only hope that young people will be the solution in closing the skills gap in a country where the shortage of skills has become a challenge. The lack of technical expertise is likely to be the biggest stumbling block to sustainable development, growth and infrastructure development in our country.

“Most young people leave school with a vague knowledge of which career to pursue. Not having enough information becomes a handicap to learners’ prospects of finding fulfilling employment.”

Clockwise: Learners at the South West Gauteng College braved the cold to attend the exhibition



Events of the
Quarter



Anti-clockwise from top left: Scores of learners attending the South West Gauteng exhibition; Learners at the science week in Sci-Bono discovery centre; Learners attending the Vulindlela career exhibition; Women at the rural women empowerment exhibition.





leaders in closing the skills gap.

The merSETA is one of the 21 Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) established to promote skills development in terms of the Skills Development Act of 1998. The 21 SETAs broadly reflect different sectors of the South African economy. The merSETA encompasses Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services.

The various industry sectors are covered by five chambers within the merSETA: Metal and engineering, Auto Manufacturing, Motor Retail and Components, New Tyre and Plastic.



merSETA

MANUFACTURING, ENGINEERING
AND RELATED SERVICES SETA

ISO 9001:2008

*facilitating sustainable
development of skills,
transformation and
accelerating growth in
manufacturing, engineering
and related services.*

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