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## **The merSETA: Press Release**

**Attention: Business Editors; Education and Training Editors; Labour Editors**

### **Bridging the disconnect between the classroom and the workplace**

#### **For immediate release,**

Higher Education and Training Minister Dr Blade Nzimande launches graduate placement project to deal with the scourge of unemployment among the youth

‘We don’t want young people to be job-seekers; we want them to be job creators.’ –

Free State Premier **Ace Magashule**

In another move aimed at tackling the scourge of unemployment among Free State youth – especially graduates – Higher Education and Training Minister Dr Blade Nzimande recently launched a graduate placement project at the Free State Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) College in Sasolburg.

In his address at the launch – which was also attended by Free State Premier Mr Ace Magashule – Dr Nzimande said the placement of graduates in a work environment was part of a broader strategy by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) to create a seamless transition from institutions of learning to workplaces.

“The disconnect between classroom education and workplace learning has created artificial boundaries leading to masses of our young graduates being unable to enter the world of work.

“Today’s launch bears testimony to the working partnership we have with the Free State provincial government. It also indicates that as government we are seriously concerned about the scourge of youth unemployment and are actively exploring different ways to defeat it and the poverty that results from it.

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**merSETA Head Office**

95 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue Corner Rustenburg Road, Melville, Johannesburg, 2109

P O Box 61826, Marshalltown 2107

Telephone No: 010 219 3000 Website: [www.merseta.org.za](http://www.merseta.org.za)



“This initiative between the DHET and the Free State government also gives practical effect to the implementation of the National Skills Accord and the Youth Employment Accord,” Dr Nzimande said.

The programme is expected to result in learners being placed in the various sectors of industry, government departments and municipalities across the Free State.

Since its establishment, the department has made a number of strides to improve graduate placement. These include:

- Collating statistics of TVET graduates requiring placement. Figures indicate that a total of 17 486 TVET graduates currently require work placement;
- Signing the National Skills Accord in 2011 and the Youth Employment Accord in 2013 with stakeholders such as business and government on students placement in the workplace;
- Opening of Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA) offices in TVET colleges, including those in townships and villages. At present, there are more than 30 SETA offices in TVET colleges;
- Establishing the Chief Directorate of Work, Integrated Learning Partnerships and Innovation in 2012 to specifically focus on issues relating to solidifying partnerships for placement of learners;
- Partnering with the Department of Public Service and Administration to coordinate placement of learners in the public service; and
- Revising the Levy Grant Regulations to provide scope for employers to take in unemployed graduates using grant mechanisms administered by SETAs.

Continuing with his address, Dr Nzimande said the White Paper on post-school education was now ready for tabling.

The paper emphasises the crucial role of technical and vocational education in the economy and sets out strategies for transforming it further. It also defines its place in the post-school system and seeks to ensure that it becomes a path to a brighter future for both the students and the country.

“To the students present here today, I hope you can see that as government we take TVET education very seriously. In fact, the current year’s total bursary allocation for TVET students is R1 988 434. The provincial total bursary allocation for TVET students in 2014 is R 2 107 739,” Dr Nzimande said.



He appealed to the students that had secured placement not to disappoint their parents, the government and the country.

“Complete your workplace training as this will put you in a better position to secure fulltime employment or acquire the necessary skills for self-employment,” Dr Nzimande concluded.

Premier Magashule said the Free State provincial government was delighted to launch such a project.

He said it was through education that young people could liberate South Africa economically.

“The Free State is playing a crucial role in creating a conducive environment in which young people can excel. Every year we offer 300 young people bursaries to further their studies at universities or colleges.

“We are also grateful to announce that about 14 000 learners registered at our TVET colleges last year. We don’t want young people to be job seekers, but they must be job creators”, concluded Magashule.

**Issued by:** Sibongiseni Ziinjiva Ka-Mnguni;

Marketing & Communications Office

The merSETA House, 95 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Cnr Rustenburg, Melville, Johannesburg

E-mail: [smnguni@merseta.org.za](mailto:smnguni@merseta.org.za)

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