



MINISTRY  
COMMUNICATIONS AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**DEPUTY MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES,  
MR PHILLY MAPULANE BUDGET VOTE SPEECH FOR  
THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES,  
2022/23 (VOTE 30)**

***Theme: Accelerating Universal Connectivity and Massifying Digital Skills towards an Inclusive Digital Economy***

Honourable Speaker

Honourable Minister Mondli Gungubele

Chairperson of our Portfolio Committee, Honourable Maneli and other Honourable Members of the Committee and Parliament

The Acting Director General and other senior departmental officials Esteemed Guests

Fellow South Africans

**Good afternoon**

**INTRODUCTION**

Yesterday I had an opportunity to visit Langa Township to host an ICT career expo at the Langa Civic Hall and to hand over electronic gadgets towards Khulani High School's computer lab. Langa, the oldest township in Cape Town, established by colonial settlers as a reservoir for cheap labour after the passing of the Urban Areas Act in 1923, a piece of legislation intended to confine Africans to segregated locations and to limit their movements, is celebrating its centenary.

The rich history of this township attests to the unbreakable human spirit in fighting against segregation and injustice. Despite attempts by colonialists to subjugate the people of Langa, the township became a theatre of fierce struggles against colonialism and apartheid. We dare not forget and dishonour the memory of the sons and daughters of this historic township, who refused to be treated as sub-humans in the land of their birth.

My budget vote speech today is dedicated to the undefeated spirit of the people of Langa, the home of King Langalibalele, of the inimitable MaBrr, the late Brenda Fassie, the home of cricketer Temba Bhavuma, of playwright and theatre director Fatima Dike, of Thabo Mngomeni a football star.

Despite the decline in other sectors of the economy, the digital economy continues to show a robust positive growth trajectory.

Growing at an average rate of 15,6% globally and accounting for 45% of global GDP. It has become a new economic growth engine for developing countries, growing at an average of 22,3% in developing countries. According to ICASA's 2023 ICT sector Report, South Africa's ICT sector recorded growth of R243.6 billion in revenue in 2021, up from R243 billion in 2020. Propelled by the the Fourth Industrial Revolution that is characterised by the growing use of new technologies such as artificial intelligence, cloud computing, robotics, 3D printing and the Internet of Things, this positive growth trajectory is bound to continue into the distant future.

## **DIGITAL SKILLING**

Honourable Speaker, we continue to implement the National Digital and Future Skills Strategy that was approved by Cabinet in 2020 which sets out a structured series of initiatives intended to contribute to the capacities of South Africans to contend with the rapidly changing skills landscape.

To this end, I reported to this house last year that through NEMISA, we trained 6 000 people on digital literacy and a total of 7 000 on other digital skills. It is my pleasure to report that a further massive 57 000 were trained in digital literacy in the 2022/23 financial year and we have set ourselves a target to train 80 000 more in this financial year as part of our fight against the existing digital skills divide. These fellow compatriots have been set up to use a variety of digital tools in their devices, they have established online presence and have been provided basic skills in cyber security and transacting safely over the internet. Many of them never had an e- mail before and now they have one and can communicate better and transact on digital platforms.

One of the programmes I have had a pleasure to champion and launch in several districts across the country is the Yarona Digital Ambassadors programme. YARONA is a digital skills massification drive that seeks to intervene in addressing unemployment and to empower and upskill the unemployed youth with basic digital skills. It offers unemployed young people an opportunity to become digital ambassadors to train their communities in digital literacy.

Through this programme we placed 124 such ambassadors in various municipalities that NEMISA partnered with. The aim is to increase the number of new recruits to 150 or more in the 2023/24 financial year.

In addition to the above, NEMISA also trained:

- 149 (56 female and 93 male) young people in Cellphone Repair. All of them emerged from the course with registered businesses. We will increase the number to 90 000 this financial year adding Broadcast digital Installations and Aftercare to take advantage of the imminent conclusion of the Broadcast Digital Migration Programme.
- 13 135 SMMEs trained in Digital Entrepreneurship, with the aim to take 11 000 through Digital Transformation this financial year to enable them to join the e-commerce space and expand their market place.
- 506 young people trained in Creative Media short courses such as Digital Photography, Vlogging and Story-telling using a digital device. Many of these young people have started their own enterprises while others are freelancing. Our target for 2023/24 is to train 1 000 more and to expand courses to include Graphic Design, Web/App Development and Podcasting. With the increasing streaming platforms content development is the future.

We wish to reiterate the call we made last year for NEMISA to continue to collaborate and partner with government entities, the private sector, universities and other stakeholders to deliver high quality training.

### **FILMS AND PUBLICATIONS BOARD**

Honourable Speaker, last year we expressed our delight at the operationalisation of the Films and Publications Amendment Act, 2019 that expanded the mandate of FPB from being a mere classification authority to being a truly online content regulator with powers to issue content distribution licences, develop regulations and enforce compliance and impose penalties in cases of non-compliance.

We are delighted to report that the FPB has moved with speed to develop the 'Online Content Regulator of the Future Strategy' which will guide it in implementing the expanded mandate and has developed new regulations for effective compliance with the Act. In addition FPB has established the Enforcement Committee provided for in the Act to deal with cases of non-compliance and imposition of the fines for the various offences outlawed by the Act.

We welcome the recent Johannesburg High Court judgement which found Mr Gerhard Ackerman guilty of over 720 charges of child pornography. We commend the FPB team for over 2000 materials of videos and images that the team meticulously analysed in support of this case resulting in a successful prosecution. As we await the sentencing of Mr Ackerman we would like the FPB to intensify its work, including public education and awareness on online harms.

On Monday, I personally witnessed in action the close collaboration between FPB and the Police in ridding our country of the proliferation of illegal video material flooding the market, when I was part of the joint raid in Athlone, here in Cape Town.

The policy and legislative measures announced last year of creating a single content regulatory system that is technology and platform neutral is on course. This includes dealing with regulatory gaps relating to fake news, misinformation, disinformation, and online scams and the need for the international OTT companies to pay for local news and content through special levies as it done elsewhere in the world.

## **CYBERSECURITY**

Honourable Speaker, Cybersecurity has become an urgent priority in this era of the rapid advance of digital technologies and the growing confidence of society to transact online. We have a constitutional obligation to protect and promote the fundamental rights of our people. It is for this reason that the Department established a Cybersecurity Hub aimed at coordinating the cybersecurity domain in the private sector and civil society. The Hub is in the process of formalising relationships with the sector- Computer Security Incident Response Teams (CSIRTs) in order to better exchange threat information and to collaborate on awareness and other initiatives in order to improve the overall threat posture of the country.

## **INTERNATIONAL WORK**

Honourable members, South Africa continues to play a pivotal role in the international community where we are a strong voice advocating the interests of developing countries in creating a stable and secure global ICT environment that supports inclusive development.

We are a member of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), a UN specialised agency dealing with the ICT sector globally. During last year's ITU plenipotentiary conference, South Africa was successfully re-elected onto the ITU Council. We further successfully campaigned for the election of a SADC candidate, Mr Cosmoc Zavazava from Zimbabwe for the position of Director for Telecommunications Development.

In the Conference, we played a critical role in the debates leading up to the conference resolutions, including the first new resolution on Artificial Intelligence which was sponsored by South Africa. This is in line with the successful establishment of the Artificial Intelligence Institute in South Africa last year, for which we have already established 2 hubs in University of Johannesburg and Tshwane University of Technology.

Later this year in November we will be participating in the ITU World Radiocommunication Conference (WRC), which is held every 3 to 4 years to review and revise the Radio

Regulations, the international treaty governing the use of radio frequency spectrum satellite orbits. The efficient use of radio frequency spectrum is at the heart of our strategic goals to achieve universal, secure, reliable and affordable connectivity.

We have been working with other departments, including the regulator ICASA and the industry to develop South Africa's position. We will once finalise seek Cabinet approval prior conference.

Following Cabinet approval, South Africa successfully hosted the prestigious International Philately Exhibition in collaboration with International Philately Federation in November 2022 at the Cape Town International Convention Centre. This international stamp show was held under the Theme: South Africa's road to democracy through stamps that were issued around the globe in support of the struggle for liberation in SA.

About 1000 Stamp collectors and exhibitors from around the globe participated in the exhibitions, which contributed in boasting our country's tourism industry which had been badly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion Honourable Speaker, among the many lessons we learn from the indestructible spirit of the people of Langa is that we should not allow ourselves to drift into accepting any divide to characterize our society.

It is absolutely essential that this digital economy is inclusive and no one is left behind because, to paraphrase an African Proverb "If the young are not initiated into the tribe, they will burn down the village just to feel it's warmth"

I thank you!

**-End-**