



MINISTRY
COMMUNICATIONS AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Private Bag X860, PRETORIA, 0001 – iParioli Office Park, 1166 Park, Hatfield, PRETORIA
Tel: +27 12 427 8000 – Fax +27 12 427 8016 – Email: Media@DCDT.gov.za URL: www.dcdt.gov.za

MINISTER KHUMBUDZO NTSHAVHENI'S REMARKS ON THE LAUNCH OF THE SEEDS OF THE FUTURE 2021

Program Director

Your Excellency, Mr. Chen Xiaodong, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China in SA

Mr. Fan Wen, our host, and CEO of Huawei South Africa,

Prof Peng Yi, the Director of the Confucius Institute of the University of Johannesburg

The Seeds of the Future (past and new cohort of students)

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good afternoon

Let me start by expressing my appreciation for the continued partnership of Huawei with our Department, the Department of Communications and Digital Technologies on the Huawei Seeds for the Future programme. Five (5) years since this initiative was started, it remains important in our path of bridging the digital divide.

Five years ago, or to be precise in 2016 when this programme was started, the world was contemplating the 4th Industrial Revolution as the future, and countries were planning on how to develop digital skills necessary for the deployment of artificial intelligence, internet of things, cloud computing, big data, 5G spectrum and related technologies. Today, as we open the 2021 Seeds for the Future programme, credit to the Covid-19 pandemic, the technologies we deemed

technologies of the future are here with us in full force. In technology-speak, we must acknowledge that for its sins, the Covid-19 pandemic leapfrogged deployment and adoption of ICTs, in particular those deemed to be technologies of the future.

The challenge with this leapfrog in technology deployment and adoption is that it demands a faster pace of skills development. This means the Seeds for the Future Programme that has to date trained over 90 students must rapidly increase the number of students it trains per annum. The hybrid teaching model Huawei has adopted for this year offers an opportunity for ramping up the numbers of students that can be trained in a year.

Programme Director,

I hope the students that are the beneficiaries of this initiative appreciate the value of this programme and act like true seeds in the area of digital skills and they will multiply themselves for the benefit of our country, South Africa, the region of SADC and the continent of Africa. At the platforms that I have spoken about emerging technologies, I like to give practical examples on how these technologies or skills that as the Seeds you are about to undergo training or in the case of Vhuthuhawe Munyai already started training.

We are all aware of the Lily Mine disaster of a few years ago, that to date, the remains of 4 mine workers are still buried underground to the grief of their families, loved ones, colleagues and of course, us as the government. Imagine if we had already adopted artificial intelligence or robotics, the workers of Lily Mine and other dangerous working conditions, we would be able to send robots to work under those conditions. What if you could use the 5G skills you acquire to make sure South Africa can provide internet connectivity for all and that access to the internet is not determined by one's geographic location. This would have made sure that a child from Tshikuwi or Masisi or Mhlabau-yalinga or Springbok or Postmansburg, did not lose any schooling day during the hard lockdown because they would have switched to online schooling.

It is an open secret that the last time spectrum was allocated in South Africa, it was 2G and operators had to farm 3G spectrum. The difference with 5G spectrum that we are going to release soon, it has wide use be it in mining, agriculture, manufacturing, tourism etc. Therefore, the skills that you are going to acquire must not be for personal keep, but for use to benefit our industries and society in general. They must be used to advance community and sustainable development.

Programme Director

When the CEO of Huawei SA was speaking, he indicated the value of applications in the 4th Industrial Revolution. The department of Communications and Digital Technologies has initiated a South African digital products portal to collect data of South African digital products, accelerating digital platforms use, and supporting efforts of scaling up digital trade services through transformative technology applications and E-commerce platforms as a way of positioning South Africa to compete in the Global Digital Economy (GDE). Through this initiative, we cannot wait for the contribution of these Seeds and to also partner with Huawei and the government of the People's Republic of China to expand the reach and adoption of South Africa's digital products. This is part of our commitment to support young people in the ICT sector to become job creators.

To our 2021 group of students, I would like to congratulate you for making it into the Huawei Seeds for the Future programme and wish you well in this great opportunity to showcase your talent and skills and build a legacy.

Your Excellency, Ambassador Chen Xiaodong, allow me to once more express our appreciation for the friendship and partnership in making South Africa a better place through the direct actions of your government and Chinese companies based in South Africa such as Huawei. We look forward to continued collaboration and cooperation.

I thank you.

Issued by the Ministry of Communications and Digital Technologies

15/11/2021