

HAPPY Freedom Month South Africa

Reflecting on Freedom Month

For the past 28 years, we have observed 27 April as a pivotal date in our country's history, because it serves as a reminder of our constant determination as a society to move away from racial segregation and discrimination and strive toward unity and equality. It is a time for our nation to reflect on how far we have come since the first democratic election in 1994 and where we are going, as we continue to pursue a state of peace, harmony and the restoration of the human dignity for all South Africans.

We also utilise this day to affirm that we will never again allow a situation where anyone is discriminated against based on their race, beliefs and sexual orientation. As much as we have taken significant steps towards a more equal society, there is still a long walk ahead as we continue to be challenged by the scourge of inequality, crime, poverty, gender-based violence and unemployment amongst others.

As the Sector Skills Training Authority, we understand the key role we have to play in our nation's ongoing quest for a free and equal society is education, because education and skills development are the cornerstones to achieving sustainable socio-economic development. Education not only raises one's productivity, creativity and self-worth, it is also pivotal to promoting entrepreneurship while inspiring innovation and ingenuity. Additionally, it is a core component of improving income distribution and cementing socio-economic progress.



According to UNESCO, there are an estimated 130 million girls between the ages of 6 and 17 who are not in school. These statistics worsen when we look at the number of women who participate in science and mathematics-related fields. Without continued strategic interventions to ensure that more young girls/ women are highly educated and have equal employment opportunities, they will remain marginalised and unable to contribute equally or participate freely in our socio-economic growth as a country.

We cannot erase the chapters of our painful past but, we can make sure that the new chapters that are yet to be written, live up to the hopes and dreams of the people who fought and died for our freedom. ■



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