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

It's cool to be a 21st century artisan

For immediate release,

The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) recently launched the *Decade of the Artisan* at Ekurhuleni East TVET College on the theme: *it's cool to be a 21st century artisan*.

The Decade of the Artisan campaign seeks to promote artisanship as a career of choice for South Africa's youth within the post-school education and training system as well as highlight skills development opportunities for artisans.

This initiative is one of the department's responses aimed at developing qualified artisans to support the South African economy, particularly in light of the successful implementation of the Strategic Infrastructure Projects (SPIs).

Addressing an enthusiastic crowd at the launch, Deputy Minister of Higher Education and Training Mduzuzi Manana said: "As part of the campaign, interactive community events will be held every three months at different engineering campuses of Further Education and Training Colleges (FETCs).

To maintain momentum, no less than 41 events will be held over the 10-year. In terms of the National Development Plan (NDP), South Africa needs to produce 30 000 artisans a year to help grow the economy and reduce poverty.

"At present the country is training an average of 12 000 qualified artisans a year. As government, we are determined to meet the target set in the NDP and we are collaborating with various partners across the public and private sector to make it happen," he said.



Artisans play a crucial role in the delivery of services, especially in engineering trades.

Through the 2014- 2024 *Decade of the Artisan* campaign, government intends to encourage more young people to see artisanship as a career of choice and through concerted development programmes, help accelerate the training of artisans.

Already, government has established the National Programme for Artisan Development. It has also released the first-ever list of occupations regarded as artisan trades in our country and globally.

Mr Manana also said it was important to reconnect local industry with TVET colleges. “However, to accomplish such a relinking of employers and workplaces to the TVET college system requires that Sector Education and Training Authorities (Setas), in particular, start to seriously facilitate partnerships between employers in their sectors and relevant TVET colleges. Before the 1980s, the colleges and employers in each community managed and controlled artisan development, resulting in very close links and relationships between local industry and each college,” he elaborated.

To assist in the transfer of valuable employer-based artisan workplace data from the Setas to the TVET college system, the DHET had set up the National Artisan Development Support Centre (NADSC).

“The centre has been fully operational for some time now, [but the] Decade of the Artisan programme gives us the opportunity to move this resource into the mainstream of artisan development.”

This same centre is now becoming the central artisan learner placement and tracking mechanism for artisan learners. Employers throughout the country need to be aware of this centre as it could save them when it comes to recruitment.

The first focus area for the campaign was partnerships between public colleges and private training providers, including training capacity within large companies, while the second focus area comprised simplifying and streamlining the quality assurance of national artisan development processes.

Mr Manana further noted that as the DHET implemented the programme, two other key areas of artisan development would also have to be accelerated in tandem with the public TVET college system.



“We are therefore signalling to the nation at large and the community of artisan development in particular that we are very serious about delivering on the commitments contained in the White Paper policy,” he concluded.

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