

**REMARKS BY THE MEC FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TOURISM AND  
ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS, REV. MUSA ZONDI**

**YOUTH ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT IN REAL ESTATE SHOWCASE**

**30 JUNE 2025**

**PMB CITY HALL**

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Programme Director;

Leaders and Representatives of the Services SETA, the Property Practitioners  
Regulatory Authority, and our implementing partners;

Distinguished Guests;

Young Pioneers of the property sector;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Good morning!

Today is not just another event on the calendar of Youth Month commemorations.

It is a milestone in our collective mission to transform the face of the real estate industry and to unlock the doors of opportunity for young people and women across KwaZulu-Natal.

In September 2023, the Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs, entered into a ground-breaking Joint Implementation and Co-Funding Partnership with Services SETA. This partnership birthed the Real Estate Training and Candidacy Programme, the largest initiative of its kind in the country. Our vision was clear: to train, accredit, and support 750 young people and women to take their rightful place in this sector as qualified property practitioners.

I am pleased to report that we have already enrolled 620 learners in the NQF 4 qualification. Many of them are here with us today, easily identifiable in their branded T-shirts. They are the next generation of property professionals. They have been equipped not only with technical knowledge but also with the confidence and practical experience to build careers, businesses, and generational wealth.

We have seen early successes. Nine beneficiaries have already progressed through their Professional Designation Examinations, setting an inspiring example of what is possible when government, training authorities, and the private sector work together.

Ladies and gentlemen, the property and real estate sector is far more than bricks and mortar. It is a strategic pillar of investment, employment, urban development, and inclusive growth. We have witnessed globally, and indeed in our own country, the risks when this sector is left untransformed, unregulated, and inaccessible to the majority.

This 7<sup>th</sup> administration has taken the bold step of prioritising transformation in real estate as part of our Medium-Term Development Plan's first goal: creating employment and fostering inclusive economic growth. In fact, Finance and related industries, including real estate, are now among the fastest-growing contributors to our provincial GDP. This is why our young people must not merely be spectators, but they must be active participants and leaders in this space.

The programme we showcase today demonstrates what is possible through collaboration. From the Property Practitioners Regulatory Authority, who have supported us from inception, to the Smile Property Group, who have provided practical placements and mentorship, each partner here today has played a critical role.

This partnership model is not only equipping our youth with qualifications, it is giving them practical exposure through the Real Estate Management System, access to property stock, and real-life trading experience. By the time they complete their training, they will be ready to step into the market as accredited, confident professionals.

But training alone is not enough. We must also ensure that the networks, opportunities, and enabling environment exist for these young practitioners to thrive. That is why I am calling on all stakeholders present - government entities, industry bodies, established firms, and financiers, to open your doors and your supply chains to the emerging players we are nurturing.

We are not merely ticking compliance boxes. We are laying the foundation of a more equitable economy and society. A society where young people from all walks of life can build wealth and dignity through property ownership and entrepreneurship.

As we look ahead, I am pleased to announce that in July, we will commence recruitment of the next 140 beneficiaries in the rapidly growing areas of Ballito, Stanger, and the City of uMhlathuze. This targeted expansion ensures that our programme is scientifically and geographically inclusive.

Additionally, in this financial year, our Department will convene a Sectoral Compact Agreement to formalise collaboration between public entities and departments so that this initiative is sustained and scaled.

Ladies and gentlemen, today we are not just showcasing a training programme. We are demonstrating what can be achieved when we share a vision and work together. We are building more than properties. We are building a legacy.

To every young participant here today: you are the pioneers of this new era. KwaZulu-Natal is proud of you, and we stand beside you as you shape your future and ours.

Thank you.