

Speech by the Minister of Rural Development and Land Reform, Mr G Nkwinti, (MP) address to the National Rural Youth Service Corps (NARYSEC) graduation, De Brug Military Base, Free State

17 March 2011

Minister of Defence Generals and all senior managers
Members of the South African National Defence Force
Ward councillors municipal managers
Parents
NARYSEC participants

Ladies and gentlemen, I extend a special welcome to our guests and our visitors and thank you for accepting our invitation to attend this very first graduation by youths that has enrolled in the National Rural Youth Service Corps (NARYSEC). I am aware that some of you have had to travel long distances to get here, we thank you for taking the time out to be here.

NARYSEC is a new programme and it is one of our flagship programmes aimed at skills development and job creation for the youth from rural areas. This programme entails inviting youths between the ages of 18 and 35 from each of the 3 300 rural wards to be enrolled for training in various skills that will equip them, both with theoretical and practical knowledge to create employment for themselves and other people in their communities. Candidates who have completed their two-year training will be able to help develop their own communities. This, at the end of the day will lead to the future development of our country by these graduates, we now congratulate today. Here at De Brug Military Base the 500 youths graduating were trained in self-discipline and patriotism. Their next stage will be to conduct house profiling to determine the household needs of the various communities.

Thereafter, this group will be trained in construction work so they can build houses, roads and ablution facilities. Once they have completed that course they will be unleashed into their respective rural communities where they will use their skills to build their village infrastructure requirements. Recently, eight of our provinces, particularly our rural areas, had been hard hit by floods and other natural disasters which had destroyed bridges and flattened houses. Several people had been killed by lightning strikes.

In future, NARYSEC trained youths will be up to the task to reconstruct these areas. The government has adopted the outcomes based approach, which has 12 outcomes. The Ministry of Rural Development and Land Reform is responsible for Outcome 7, namely, "vibrant, equitable and sustainable rural communities and food security for all". The clarion call of the government this year is job creation.

The NARYSEC programme forms a critical part of the outputs for which the department is responsible, more so in terms of attaining national food security. The objective of this meeting is to congratulate our first graduates for completing the training. However, I must stress that these youths have not undergone military training. They have been exposed to military discipline so they make better, patriotic citizens for their country. NARYSEC youths should, during the course of training, always articulate their challenges through the established channels of communication.

Students should not only highlight their challenges but should also come up with proposed solutions to the challenges affecting them.

The first question we must answer today is how the NARYSEC programme can more effectively contribute to achieving the objectives of agrarian transformation, such as sustainable agrarian reform, de-racialisation of the rural economy for shared and sustainable growth; democratic and equitable land allocation and use across gender, race and class; and, strict production discipline for guaranteed national food security? Ladies and gentlemen, a programme like this cannot be effective without hard work and dedication.

I would firstly like to thank the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans and all the staff from her departments who responded to the call from NARYSEC to develop this specific youth service programme. We are looking forward to expand this programme even further to more NARYSEC participants in more military facilities.

The Commanding Officer of De Brug and his team of instructors deserve a special word of appreciation. They have accepted the challenge of this new programme and have truly excelled at the task. Secondly, this programme would not have been a success if the NARYSEC participants did not work as hard as they did. I would like to thank you for that. I want to take this opportunity to congratulate our first batch of NARYSEC youths who have successfully completed their course at the military base. I wish them all the best with their future training.

I thank you.

Source: Department of Rural Development and Land Reform